



# Bret Harte's



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# BRET HARTE'S

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# BRET HARTE'S CHOICE BITS.

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BRET HARTE.

**S**EVERAL years ago, Thomas Starr King, then unknowingly near the end of his short but noble and glowing life, was guiding an acquaintance through the dingy, gold-strewn recesses of the Government Mint building in San Francisco. Pausing before entering the Secretary's little office, he said: "Now I want you to meet a young man who will be heard of far and wide some of these days." The visitor went in and was introduced to Francis Bret Harte, then Secretary of the Branch Mint. We all know how the later career of the young writer has more than justified

the affectionate prediction of Starr King ; for, since that day, Bret Harte's fame has, to borrow the language of his admiring German translator, "extended from the coasts of the Pacific Ocean to the English coast of the North Sea. His works have drawn hearts to him wherever the language of Shakespeare, of Milton, and Byron is spoken."

A man who has so many readers must needs inspire a kindly curiosity to know something of the antecedents in a life which has given such generous promise of nobler works to come. Mr. Harte was born at Albany, New York, in 1839. He was christened Francis Bret Harte ; but his second name,—an old family one,—was that by which he was familiarly known among home friends and acquaintances. Later in life, the initial of his Christian name was dropped altogether, and the world learned to know and love him by the somewhat crisp title of "Bret Harte."

Young Harte grew up surrounded by refining influences ; his father was a teacher of girls, and a ripe and cultured student withal. Left fatherless, Harte wandered off to California in 1854, dazzled with the golden visions which then transfigured that distant land ; and, won by the fantastic romance which stories of the early Spanish occupation, sudden wealth, surprising adventure, and novel life and scenery invested the country, he cast

nimself into the changeful stream of humanity which ebbed and flowed among the young cities by the sea, the pine-clad ridges of the Sierra, and the rude camps of the gold-hunters which were then breaking the stillness of long unweared solitudes. No age nor condition, no quality of manhood, nor grade of moral or mental culture was unrepresented in that motley tide of migration. The dreamy young student, the future poet of the Argonauts of 1849, drifted on with the rest.

For two or three years he, like all the restless wanderers of those days, pursued a various calling and had no fixed abode. An unsatisfied desire for change, a half-confessed impatience with long tarrying in any spot, seemed to possess every soul. Mining camps and even thrifty towns were depopulated in a single day, the unnoted casualties of their rough life emptying a few places, the rest being eagerly left behind by men who drifted far and wide; their lately coveted "claims" were quickly occupied by other rovers from other fields. Harte mined a little, taught school a little, tried his hand at type-setting and frontier journalism, climbed mountains and threaded ravines as the mounted messenger of an express company, or acted as agent for that company in some of the mountain towns which we have learned to know so well as Sandy Bar, Poker Flat, and Wingdam.

But all the while the lithe, agile, and alert young artist was absorbing impressions of the picturesque life, scenery, manners, and talk which surrounded him as an atmosphere.

In 1857, or thereabouts, he drifted back to San Francisco—"The Bay," as the pleasant city by the sea was fondly called by the wandering sons of adventure. The Bay was the little heaven where were cool sea-winds, good cheer, and glimpses of that sensuous life which was then thought of as a far-off, faintly-remembered good, found only in "the States." Here Harte speedily developed into a clever young *littérateur*. Working in the composing-room of a weekly literary journal, he put into type some of his own graceful little sketches by way of experiment. These were noticed and appreciated by the editor, and he was translated from "the case" to the editorial room of *The Golden Era*, where some of the pleasant papers which find place in his later published works were written. These were chiefly local sketches, like "A Boy's Dog," "Side-walkings," and "From a Balcony." Meantime, marriage and the cares of a growing household had changed the vagrant fancy of the young writer, and he roved no more. He wrote a great deal which has not been gathered up till lately, and in the columns of daily papers, as well as in *The Californian*, a literary weekly which he some time edited, appeared

innumerable papers which enriched the current literature of those times, and swelled the volume of that higher quality of California journalism which seems now to have passed quite away.

In 1864 he was appointed Secretary of the United States Branch Mint in San Francisco, a position which, during the six years he held it, gave him time and opportunity for more careful work than any which he had heretofore accomplished. During this time some of the most famous of his poems and sketches were written. "John Burns of Gettysburg," "The Pliocene Skull," "The Society upon the Stanislaw," "How are you, Sanitary?" and other little unique gems of verse were written about this time and first appeared (for the most part) anonymously in the San Francisco newspapers. In July, 1868, the publication of *The Overland Monthly* was begun, with Bret Harte as its organiser and editor. The success of the magazine was immediate and decided. We cannot tell how much of its renown was owing to the series of remarkable stories which immediately began to flow from the pen of its accomplished editor, nor how much to the rare talent which he seems to have had in awaking the dormant energies of those who constituted his loyal staff of contributors. *The Overland* became at once a unique, piquant and highly-desired element in the current literature of

the Republic ; and it found a multitude of readers on both sides of the Atlantic. In its pages, August, 1868, appeared "The Luck of Roaring Camp," a story, which, whatever may be the merits of those which have succeeded it, gave Harte the first of his great fame as a prose-writer. But it was not until January of the next year, that the stimulated appetite of the impatient public was appeased by the production of "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," a dramatic tale which probably contains more firmly-drawn and distinct characters than have appeared in any one of Harte's stories or sketches. "Miggles" came next, and, marshalled in their long array, the inimitable personages who figure in still later stories emerged from their shadowy realm and passed into the language and familiar acquaintance of the English-speaking world. Colonel Starbottle, John Oakhurst, Stumpy, Tennessee's Partner and Miggles—with laughter and with tears we remember them all ; we shall know them as long as we know Sam Weller, Micawber, Little Nell and the goodly company called into being by that other magician who has laid down his wand for ever. Miss has had her portrait in the Royal Academy Exhibition, 1874.

Harte's poems are more thickly scattered through his later work in California than elsewhere. Some of the best-known were written between 1865 and

1870; "Plain Language from Truthful James," popularly quoted as the "Heathen Chinees," appeared in *The Overland* of September, 1870. A more ambitious work, "The Lost Galleon," was an earlier production, and gave title to a thin volume of fugitive bits of verse published in San Francisco a year or two before. Harte's first book was the *Condensed Novels*, a collection of wonderful imitations, too real to be called parodies, first printed in *The California*, published in a poorly executed volume in New York, called in and republished and reinforced in 1871. Four new volumes have issued from the pen of the poet story-teller, and a great constituency hungrily waits for more.

In the Spring of 1871, Harte, resigning the editorial position which he held, as well as the Professorship of Recent Literature in the University of California, to which he had lately been called, returned to his native State with the ripened powers and generous fame which he had gathered during his seventeen years of absence. When his life shall have been adjusted to the new conditions which meet here any long absent wanderer, we shall, no doubt, see the somewhat wavering panorama of his genius move on more steadily, glowing with more vivid colours and crowded with more life-like shapes than any which his magical touch has yet placed on canvas.



In a few words prefixed to one of his later books, Bret Harte says that the old life he described in his Californian stories is dead. The country is now much better known, and more accessible. The completion of the Pacific Railway, and the increased facilities for speedy transit have placed that hitherto isolated community within easy reach of the ordinary tourist. Already clean shaven faces, ominous of certain civilizations, coats fashioned by Poole are in San Francisco, tweed suits contaminate the cars, and the print of an obvious English walking shoe may be seen on the red soil of the mountains, overlooking the Golden Gate.

What Harte's repute and standing are in his own land need not now be told. Few writers of modern times have been more discussed; it were better if his critics had always been generous as well as just. But it would not be fair to close this little sketch without noting the fact that most of his works have found eager readers in other lands. English editions of his stories are popular and widely circulated. In Germany, the genial old poet, Ferdinand Freiligrath, has translated a volume of Harte's prose tales, to which is prefixed a charming preface by the translator. We cannot forbear making this extract, so full of the simple-hearted Freiligrath's goodness:—

“Nevertheless, he remains what he is—the Cali-

fornian and the gold-digger. But the gold for which he has dug, and which he found, is not the gold in the bed of the rivers,—not the gold in the veins of mountains; it is the gold of love, of goodness, of fidelity, of humanity, which even in rude and wild hearts,—even under the rubbish of vices and sins,—remains for ever uneradicated from the human heart. That he there searched for this gold,—that he found it there and triumphantly exhibited it to the world,—that is his greatness and his merit. This it is which drew hearts to him wherever the language of Shakespeare, of Milton and Byron is spoken. And this it is which has made me, the old German poet, the translator of the young American colleague; and which has led me to-day to reach to him warmly and cordially my hand across the sea. Good luck, Bret Harte! Good luck, my gold-digger!"

In Forster's "Life of Dickens," the biographer writes: "Not many months before my friend's death, he had sent me two sketches by a young American writer far away in California, ('The Outcasts of Poker Flat,' and another,) in which he had found such subtle strokes of character as he had not anywhere else in late years discovered; the manner resembling himself, but the matter fresh to a degree that had surprised him; the painting in all respects masterly, and the wild rude thing

painted a quite wonderful reality. I have rarely known him more honestly moved."

M. Dentzon has charmingly introduced some of Harte's California sketches to the French world of readers, and, in an article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, has given at great length a critical analysis of the powers and genius of our favourite storyteller. Our French and German friends alike wrestle with the difficulties of the untranslatable; but, *malgré* their failure to master the dialect of the gold-digger, they reproduce admirably the delicate finish and felicitous manipulation of the author. Thus his genius has found expression in many languages, and the gentle, loving spirit which animates his works lives and walks in lands on either side the sea.





## THE LUCK OF ROARING CAMP.

**T**HERE was commotion in Roaring Camp. It could not have been a fight, for in 1850 that was not novel enough to have called together the entire settlement. The ditches and claims were not only deserted, but "Tuttle's Grocery" had contributed its gamblers, who, it will be remembered, calmly continued their game the day that French Pete and Kanaka Joe shot each other to death over the bar in the front room. The whole camp was collected before a rude cabin on the outer edge of the clearing. Conversation was carried on in a low tone, but the name of a woman was frequently repeated. It was a name familiar enough in the camp,—*"Cherokee Sal."*

Perhaps the less said of her the better. She was a coarse, and, it is to be feared, a very sinful woman. But at that time she was the only woman in Roaring Camp, and was just then lying in sore extremity, when she most needed the ministration

of her own sex. Dissolute, abandoned, and irreclaimable, she was yet suffering a martyrdom hard enough to bear even when veiled by sympathising womanhood, but now terrible in her loneliness. The primal curse had come to her in that original isolation which must have made the punishment of the first transgression so dreadful. It was, perhaps, part of the expiation of her sin, that, at a moment when she most lacked her sex's intuitive tenderness and care, she met only the half-contemptuous faces of her masculine associates. Yet a few of the spectators were, I think, touched by her sufferings. Sandy Tipton thought it was "rough on Sal," and, in the contemplation of her condition, for a moment rose superior to the fact that he had an ace and two bowers in his sleeve.

It will be seen, also, that the situation was novel. Deaths were by no means uncommon in Roaring Camp, but a birth was a new thing. People had been dismissed the camp effectively, finally, and with no possibility of return; but this was the first time that anybody had been introduced *ab initio*. Hence the excitement.

"You go in there, Stumpy," said a prominent citizen known as "Kentuck," addressing one of the loungers. "Go in there, and see what you kin do. You've had experience in them things."

Perhaps there was a fitness in the selection.

Stumpy, in other climes had been the putative head of two families ; in fact, it was owing to some legal informality in these proceedings that Roaring Camp—a city of refuge—was indebted for his company. The crowd approved the choice, and Stumpy was wise enough to bow to the majority. The door closed on the extempore surgeon and midwife, and Roaring Camp sat down outside, smoked its pipe, and awaited the issue.

The assemblage numbered about a hundred men. One or two of these were actual fugitives from justice, some were criminal, and all were reckless. Physically, they exhibited no indication of their past lives and characters. The greatest scamp had a Raphael face, with a profusion of blonde hair ; Oakhurst, a gambler, had the melancholy air and intellectual abstraction of a Hamlet ; the coolest and most courageous man was scarcely over five feet in height, with a soft voice and an embarrassed, timid manner. The term “roughs” applied to them was a distinction rather than a definition. Perhaps in the minor details of fingers, toes, ears, &c., the camp may have been deficient, but these slight omissions did not detract from their aggregate force. The strongest man had but three fingers on his right hand ; the best shot had but one eye.

Such was the physical aspect of the men that were dispersed about the cabin. The camp lay in

a triangular valley, between two hills and a river. The only outlet was a steep trail over the summit of a hill that faced the cabin, now illuminated by the rising moon. The suffering woman might have seen it from the rude bunk whereon she lay,—seen it winding like a silver thread until it was lost in the stars above.

A fire of withered pine-boughs added sociability to the gathering. By degrees the natural levity of Roaring Camp returned. Bets were freely offered and taken regarding the result. Three to five that "Sal would get through with it;" even, that the child would survive; side bets as to the sex and complexion of the coming stranger. In the midst of an excited discussion, an exclamation came from those nearest the door, and the camp stopped to listen. Above the swaying and moaning of the pines, the swift rush of the river, and the crackling of the fire, rose a sharp, querulous cry,—a cry unlike anything heard before in the camp. The pines stopped moaning, the river ceased to rush, and the fire to crackle. It seemed as if Nature had stopped to listen too.

The camp rose to its feet as one man! It was proposed to explode a barrel of gunpowder, but, in consideration of the situation of the mother, better counsels prevailed, and only a few revolvers were discharged; for, whether owing to the rude surgery

of the camp, or some other reason, Cherokee Sal was sinking fast. Within an hour she had climbed, as it were, that rugged road that led to the stars, and so passed out of Roaring Camp, its sin and shame, for ever. I do not think that the announcement disturbed them much, except in speculation as to the fate of the child. "Can he live now?" was asked of Stumpy. The answer was doubtful. The only other being of Cherokee Sal's sex and maternal condition in the settlement was an ass. There was some conjecture as to fitness, but the experiment was tried. It was less problematical than the ancient treatment of Romulus and Remus, and apparently as successful.

When these details were completed, which exhausted another hour, the door was opened, and the anxious crowd of men who had already formed themselves into a queue, entered in single file. Beside the low bunk or shell, on which the figure of the mother was starkly outlined below the blankets, stood a pine table. On this a candle-box was placed, and within it, swathed in staring red flannel, lay the last arrival at Roaring Camp. Beside the candle-box was placed a hat. Its use was soon indicated. "Gentlemen," said Stumpy, with a singular mixture of authority and *ex officio* complacency,—“Gentleman will please pass in at the front door, round the table, and out at the



back door. Them as wishes to contribute anything toward the orphan will find a hat handy." The first man entered with his hat on; he uncovered, however, as he looked about him, and so, unconsciously, set an example to the next. In such communities good and bad actions are catching. As the procession filed in, comments were audible,—criticisms addressed, perhaps, rather to Stumpy, in the character of showman,—“Is that him?” “mighty small specimen;” “hasn’t mor’n got the colour;” “ain’t bigger nor a derringer.” The contributions were as characteristic: A silver tobacco-box; a doubloon; a navy revolver, silver mounted; a gold specimen; a very beautifully embroidered lady’s handkerchief (from Oakhurst the gambler); a diamond breastpin; a diamond ring (suggested by the pin, with the remark from the giver that he “saw that pin and went two diamonds better”); a slung shot; a Bible (contributor not detected); a golden spur; a silver teaspoon (the initials, I regret to say, were not the giver’s); a pair of surgeon’s shears; a lancet; a Bank of England note for £5; and about \$200 in loose gold and silver coin. During these proceedings Stumpy maintained a silence as impassive as the dead on his left, a gravity as inscrutable as that of the newly born on his right. Only one incident occurred to break the monotony of the curious procession. As Kentuck bent over the

candle-box half curiously, the child turned, and, in a spasm of pain, caught at his groping finger, and held it fast for a moment. Kentuck looked foolish and embarrassed. Something like a blush tried to assert itself in his weather-beaten cheek. "The d—d little cuss!" he said, as he extricated his finger, with, perhaps, more tenderness and care than he might have been deemed capable of showing. He held that finger a little apart from its fellows as he went out, and examined it curiously. The examination provoked the same original remark in regard to the child. In fact, he seemed to enjoy repeating it. "He rastled with my finger," he remarked to Tipton, holding up the member, "the d—d little cuss!"

It was four o'clock before the camp sought repose. A light burnt in the cabin where the watchers sat, for Stumpy did not go to bed that night. Nor did Kentuck. He drank quite freely, and related with great gusto his experience, invariably ending with his characteristic condemnation of the new-comer. It seemed to relieve him of any unjust implication of sentiment, and Kentuck had the weaknesses of the nobler sex. When everybody else had gone to bed, he walked down to the river, and whistled reflectingly. Then he walked up the gulch, past the cabin, still whistling with demonstrative unconcern. At a large red-wood tree he paused and

retraced his steps, and again passed the cabin. Half-way down to the river's bank he again paused, and then returned and knocked at the door. It was opened by Stumpy. "How goes it?" said Kentuck, looking past Stumpy towards the candle-box. "All serene," replied Stumpy. "Anything up?" "Nothing." There was a pause—an embarrassing one—Stumpy still holding the door. Then Kentuck had recourse to his finger, which he held up to Stumpy. "Rastled with it,—the d—d little cuss," he said, and retired.

The next day Cherokee Sal had such rude sepulture as Roaring Camp afforded. After her body had been committed to the hillside, there was a formal meeting of the camp to discuss what should be done with her infant. A resolution to adopt it was unanimous and enthusiastic. But an animated discussion in regard to the manner and feasibility of providing for its wants at once sprung up. It was remarkable that the argument partook of none of those fierce personalities with which discussions were usually conducted at Roaring Camp. Tipton proposed that they should send the child to Red Dog, a distance of forty miles,—where female attention could be procured. But the unlucky suggestion met with fierce and unanimous opposition. It was evident that no plan which entailed parting from their new acquisition would for a moment be

entertained. "Besides," said Tom Ryder, "them fellows at Red Dog would swap it, and ring in somebody else on us." A disbelief in the honesty of other camps prevailed at Roaring Camp as in other places.

The introduction of a female nurse in the camp also met with objection. It was argued that no decent woman could be prevailed to accept Roaring Camp as her home, and the speaker urged that "they didn't want any more of the other kind." This unkind allusion to the defunct mother harsh as it may seem, was the first spasm of propriety,—the first symptom of the camp's regeneration. Stumpy advanced nothing. Perhaps he felt a certain delicacy in interfering with the selection of a possible successor in office. But when questioned, he averred stoutly that he and "Jinny"—the mammal before alluded to—could manage to rear the child. There was something original, independent and heroic about the plan that pleased the camp. Stumpy was retained. Certain articles were sent for to Sacramento. "Mind," said the treasurer, as he pressed a bag of gold dust into the expressman's hand, "the best that can be got,—lace, you know. and filigree-work and frills,—d—n the cost!"

Strange to say, the child thrived. Perhaps the invigorating climate of the mountain camp was compensation for maternal deficiencies. Nature

took the foundling to her broader breast. In that rare atmosphere of the Sierra foothills,—that air pungent with balsamic odour, that ethereal cordial at once bracing and exhilarating,—he may have found food and nourishment, or a subtle chemistry that transmitted asses' milk to lime and phosphorus. Stumpy inclined to the belief that it was the latter and good nursing. "Me and that ass," he would say, "has been father and mother to him! Don't you," he would add, apostrophising the helpless bundle before him, "never go back on us."

By the time he was a month old, the necessity of giving him a name became apparent. He had generally been known as "the Kid," "Stumpy's boy," "the Cayote" (an allusion to his vocal powers), and even by Kentuck's endearing diminutive of "the d—d little cuss." But these were felt to be vague and unsatisfactory, and were at last dismissed under another influence. Gamblers and adventurers are generally superstitious, and Oakhurst one day declared that the baby had brought "the luck" to Roaring Camp. It was certain that of late they had been successful. "Luck" was the name agreed upon, with the prefix of Tommy for greater convenience. No allusion was made to the mother, and the father was unknown. "It's better," said the philosophical Oakhurst, "to take a fresh deal all round. Call him Luck, and start him fair."

A day was accordingly set apart for the christening. What was meant by this ceremony the reader may imagine, who has already gathered some idea of the reckless irreverence of Roaring Camp. The master of ceremonies was one "Boston," a noted wag, and the occasion seemed to promise the greatest facetiousness. This ingenious satirist had spent two days in preparing a burlesque of the church service, with pointed local allusions. The choir was properly trained, and Sandy Tipton was to stand godfather. But after the procession had marched to the grove with music and banners, and the child had been deposited before a mock altar, Stumpy stepped before the expectant crowd. "It ain't my style to spoil fun, boys," said the little man, stoutly, eyeing the faces around him, "but it strikes me that this thing ain't exactly on the squar. It's playing it pretty low down on this yer baby to ring in fun on him that he ain't going to understand. And ef there's going to be any god-fathers round, I'd like to see who's got any better rights than me." A silence followed Stumpy's speech. To the credit of all humorists be it said, that the first man to acknowledge its justice was the satirist, thus stopped of his fun. "But," said Stumpy, quickly, following up his advantage, "we're here for a christening, and we'll have it. I proclaim you Thomas Luck, according to the laws

of the United States and the State of California, so help me God." It was the first time that the name of the Deity had been uttered otherwise than profanely in the camp. The form of christening was perhaps even more ludicrous than the satirist had conceived ; but, strangely enough, nobody saw it and nobody laughed. "Tommy" was christened as seriously as he would have been under a Christian roof, and cried and was comforted in as orthodox a fashion.

And so the work of regeneration began in Roaring Camp. Almost imperceptibly a change came over the settlement. The cabin assigned to "Tommy Luck"—or, "The Luck," as he was more frequently called—first showed signs of improvement. It was kept scrupulously clean and whitewashed. Then it was boarded, clothed, and papered. The rosewood cradle—packed eighty miles by mule—had, in Stumpy's way of putting it, "sorter killed the rest of the furniture." So the rehabilitation of the cabin became a necessity. The men who were in the habit of lounging in at Stumpy's to see "how The Luck got on" seemed to appreciate the change, and, in self-defence, the rival establishment of "Tuttle's grocery" bestirred itself, and imported a carpet and mirrors. The reflections of the latter on the appearance of Roaring Camp tended to produce stricter habits of personal cleanliness. Again,

Stumpy imposed a kind of quarantine upon those who aspired to the honour and privilege of holding "The Luck." It was a cruel mortification to Kentuck—who, in the carelessness of a large nature and the habits of frontier life, had begun to regard all garments as a second cuticle, which, like a snake's, only sloughed off through decay—to be debarred this privilege from certain prudential reasons. Yet such was the subtle influence of innovation that he thereafter appeared regularly every afternoon in a clean shirt, and face still shining from his ablutions. Nor were moral and social sanitary laws neglected. "Tommy," who was supposed to spend his whole existence in a persistent attempt to repose, must not be disturbed by noise. The shouting and yelling which had gained the camp its infelicitous title were not permitted within hearing distance of Stumpy's. The men conversed in whispers, or smoked with Indian gravity. Profanity was tacitly given up in these sacred precincts, and throughout the camp a popular form of expletive, known as "D—n the luck!" and "Curse the luck!" was abandoned, as having a new personal bearing. Vocal music was not interdicted, being supposed to have a soothing, tranquillising quality, and one song, sung by "Man-o' War Jack," an English sailor, from her Majesty's Australian colonies, was quite popular as a lullaby. It was a



lugubrious recital of the exploits of " 'the Arethusa, Seventy-four,' " in a muffled minor, ending with a prolonged dying fall at the burden of each verse, " On b-o-o-o-ard of the 'Arethusa.' " It was a fine sight to see Jack holding *The Luck*, rocking from side to side as if with the motion of a ship, and crooning forth this naval ditty. Either through the peculiar rocking of Jack or the length of his song,—it contained ninety stanzas, and was continued with conscientious deliberation to the bitter end,—the lullaby generally had the desired effect. At such times the men would lie at full length under the trees, in the soft summer twilight, smoking their pipes and drinking in the melodious utterances. An indistinct idea that this was pastoral happiness pervaded the camp. " This 'ere kind o' think," said the Cockney Simmons, meditatively reclining on his elbow, " is 'ev'ingly." It reminded him of Greenwich.

On the long summer days *The Luck* was usually carried to the gulch, from whence the golden store of Roaring Camp was taken. There, on the blanket spread over pine boughs, he would lie while the men were working in the ditches below. Latterly, there was a rude attempt to decorate this bower with flowers and sweet-smelling shrubs, and generally someone would bring him a cluster of wild honeysuckles, azaleas, or the painted blossoms of

Las Mariposas. The men had suddenly awakened to the fact that there were beauty and significance in these trifles, which they had so long trodden carelessly beneath their feet. A flake of glittering mica, a fragment of variegated quartz, a bright pebble from the bed of the creek, became beautiful to eyes thus cleared and strengthened, and were invariably put aside for "The Luck." It was wonderful how many treasures the woods and hillsides yielded that "would do for Tommy." Surrounded by playthings such as never child out of fairy-land had before, it is to be hoped that Tommy was content. He appeared to be supremely happy, albeit there was an infantine gravity about him, a contemplative light in his round gray eyes, that sometimes worried Stumpy. He was always tractable and quiet, and it is recorded that once, having crept beyond his "corral,"—a hedge of tessellated pine boughs, which surrounded his bed—he dropped over the bank on his head in the soft earth, and remained with his mottled legs in the air in that position for at least five minutes with unflinching gravity. He was extricated without a murmur. I hesitate to record the many other instances of his sagacity, which rest, unfortunately, upon the statements of prejudiced friends. Some of them were not without a tinge of superstition. "I crep' up the bank just now," said Kentuck one

day, in a breathless state of excitement, "and dern my skin if he wasn't a talking to a jay-bird as was sittin' on his lap. There they was, just as free and sociable as anything you please, a jawin' at each other just like two cherry-bums." Howbeit, whether creeping over the pine boughs or lying lazily on his back blinking at the leaves above him, to him the birds sang, the squirrels chattered, and the flowers bloomed. Nature was his nurse and playfellow. For him she would let slip between the leaves golden shafts of sunlight that fell just within his grasp; she would send wandering breezes to visit him with the balm of bay and resinous gums; to him the tall red-woods nodded familiarly and sleepily, the bumble-bees buzzed, and the rooks cawed a slumbrous accompaniment.

Such was the golden summer of Roaring Camp. They were "flush times,"—and the Luck was with them. The claims had yielded enormously. The camp was jealous of its privileges and looked suspiciously on strangers. No encouragement was given to immigration, and, to make their seclusion more perfect, the land on either side of the mountain wall that surrounded the camp they duly pre-empted. This, and a reputation for singular proficiency with the revolver, kept the reserve of Roaring Camp inviolate. The expressman—their only connecting link with the surrounding world—

sometimes told wonderful stories of the camp. He would say, "They've a street up there in 'Roaring,' that would lay over any street in Red Dog. They've got vines and flowers round their houses, and they wash themselves twice a day. But they're mighty rough on strangers, and they worship an Ingin baby."

With the prosperity of the camp came a desire for further improvement. It was proposed to build a hotel in the following spring, and to invite one or two decent families to reside there for the sake of "The Luck,"—who might perhaps profit by female companionship. The sacrifice that this concession to the sex cost these men, who were fiercely sceptical in regard to its general virtue and usefulness, can only be accounted for by their affection for Tommy. A few still held out. But the resolve could not be carried into effect for three months, and the minority meekly yielded in the hope that something might turn up to prevent it. And it did.

The winter of 1851 will long be remembered in the foothills. The snow lay deep on the Sierras, and every mountain creek became a river, and every river a lake. Each gorge and gulch was transformed into a tumultuous watercourse that descended the hillsides, tearing down giant trees and scattering its drift and *débris* along the plain. Red Dog had

been twice under waer, and Roaring Camp had been forewarned. "Water put the gold into them gulches," said Stumpy. "It's been here once and will be here again!"—And that night the North Fork suddenly leaped over its banks, and swept up the triangular valley of Roaring Camp.

In the confusion of rushing water, crushing trees, and crackling timber, and the darkness which seemed to flow with the water and blot out the fair valley, but little could be done to collect the scattered camp. When the morning broke, the cabin of Stumpy nearest the river bank was gone. Higher up the gulch they found the body of its unlucky owner; but the pride, the hope, the joy, the Luck, of Roaring Camp had disappeared. They were returning with sad hearts, when a shout from the bank recalled them.

It was a relief-boat from down the river. They had picked up, they said, a man and an infant, nearly exhausted, about two miles below. Did anybody know them, and did they belong here?

It needed but a glance to show them Kentuck lying there, cruelly crushed and bruised, but still holding the Luck of Roaring Camp in his arms. As they bent over the strangely-assorted pair, they saw that the child was cold and pulseless. "He is dead," said one. Kentuck opened his eyes. "Dead?" he repeated, feebly. "Yes, my man, and you are

dying too." A smile lit the eyes of the expiring Kentuck. "Dying," he repeated, "he's a taking me with him,—tell the boys I've got the Luck with me now;" and the strong man, clinging to the frail babe as a drowning man is said to cling to a straw, drifted away into the shadowy river that flows for ever to the unknown sea.





## THE PAGAN CHILD.

### CHAPTER I.

**T** was nearly two o'clock in the morning. The lights were out in Robinson's Hall, where there had been dancing and revelry; and the moon, riding high, painted the black windows with silver. The cavalcade, that an hour ago had shocked the sedate pines with song and laughter, were all dispersed. One enamoured swain had ridden east, another west, another north, another south; and the object of their adoration, left within her bower at Chemisal Ridge, was calmly going to bed.

I regret that I am not able to indicate the exact stage of that process. Two chairs were already filled with delicate inwrappings and white confusion; and the young lady herself, half-hidden in the silky threads of her yellow hair, had at one time borne a faint resemblance to a partly-husked ear of Indian corn. But she was now clothed in that one long, formless garment that makes all women equal; and the round shoulders and neat

waist, that an hour ago had been so fatal to the peace of mind of Four Forks, had utterly disappeared. The face above it was very pretty; the foot below, albeit shapely, was not small. "The flowers, as a general thing, don't raise their heads *much* to look after me," she had said with superb frankness to one of her lovers.

The expression of the "Rose," to-night was contentedly placid. She walked slowly to the window, and, making the smallest possible peep-hole through the curtain, looked out. The motionless figure of a horseman still lingered on the road, with an excess of devotion that only a coquette, or a woman very much in love, could tolerate. The "Rose" at that moment, was neither, and, after a reasonable pause, turned away, saying quite audibly that it was "too ridiculous for anything." As she came back to her dressing-table, it was noticeable that she walked steadily and erect, without that slight affectation of lameness common to people with whom bare feet are only an episode. Indeed, it was only four years ago, that, without shoes or stockings, a long-limbed, colty-girl, in a waistless calico-gown, she had leaped from the tailboard of her father's emigrant wagon when it first drew up at Chemisal Ridge. Certain wild habits of the "Rose" had outlived transplanting and cultivation.

A knock at the door surprised her. In another



moment she had leaped into bed, and, with darkly frowning eyes, from its secure recesses demanded, "Who's there?"

An apologetic murmur on the other side of the door was the response.

"Why, father, is that you?"

There were further murmurs, affirmative, deprecatory, and persistent.

"Wait," said the "Rose." She got up, unlocked the door, leaped nimbly into bed again, and said, "Come."

The door opened timidly. The broad, stooping shoulders and grizzled head of a man past the middle age appeared; after a moment's hesitation, a pair of large, diffident feet, shod with canvas slippers, concluded to follow. When the apparition was complete, it closed the door softly, and stood there,—a very sly ghost indeed,—with apparently more than the usual spiritual indisposition to begin a conversation. The "Rose" resented this impatiently, though, I fear, not altogether intelligibly.

"Do, father, I declare!"

"You was abed, Jinny," said Mr. McClosky, slowly, glancing, with a singular mixture of masculine awe and paternal pride, upon the two chairs and their contents,—*"you was abed and ondressed."*

"I was."

"Surely," said Mr. McClosky, seating himself on the extreme edge of the bed, and painfully tucking his feet away under it,—*"surely."* After a pause, he rubbed a short, thick, stumpy beard, that bore a general resemblance to a badly-worn blacking-brush, with the palm of his hand, and went on: *"You had a good time, Jinny?"*

*"Yes, father."*

*"They was all there?"*

*"Yes, Rance and York, and Ryder and Jack."*

*"And Jack!"* Mr. McClosky endeavoured to throw an expression of arch inquiry into his small tremulous eyes; but meeting the unabashed, widely opened lid of his daughter, he winked rapidly, and blushed to the roots of his hair.

*"Yes, Jack was there,"* said Jinny, without change of colour, or the least self-consciousness in her great grey eyes; *"and he came home with me."* She paused a moment, locking her two hands under her head, and assuming a more comfortable position on the pillow. *"He asked me that same question again, father, and I said, 'Yes.' It's to be—soon. We're going to live at Four Forks, in his own house; and next winter we're going to Sacramento. I suppose it's all right, father, eh?"* She emphasised the question with a slight kick through the bedclothes, as the parental McClosky had fallen into an abstract reverie.

"Yes, surely," said Mr. Mc Closky, recovering himself with some confusion. After a pause, he looked down at the bedclothes, and, patting them tenderly, continued :—

"You couldn't have done better, Jinny. There isn't a girl in Tuolumne ez could strike it ez rich as you hev—even if they got the chance." He paused again, and then said :—

"Jinny ?"

"Yes, father."

"You'se in bed, and ondressed ?"

"Yes."

"You couldn't" said Mr. Mc Closky, glancing hopelessly at the two chairs, and slowly rubbing his chin,—“you couldn't dress yourself again, could yer ?”

"Why, father ?"

"Kinder get yourself into them things again ?" he added, hastily. "Not all of 'em, you know, but some of 'em. Not if I helped you,—sorter stood by, and lent a hand now and then with a strap, or a buckle, or a neck-tie, or a shoe-string ?" he continued, still looking at the chairs, and evidently trying to boldly familiarise himself with their contents.

"Are you crazy, father ?" demanded Jinny, suddenly sitting up with a portentous switch of her yellow mane.

Mr. McClosky rubbed one side of his beard, which already had the appearance of having been quite worn away by that process, and faintly dodged the question.

"Jinny" he said, tenderly stroking the bed-clothes as he spoke, "this yer's what's the matter. Thar is a stranger downstairs,—a stranger to you, lovey, but a man ez I've knowed a long time. He's been here about an hour, and he'll be here ontill fower o'clock, when the up-stage passes. Now I wants ye, Jinny dear, to get up and come downstairs, and kinder help me pass the time with him. It's no use, Jinny," he went on, gently raising his hand to deprecate any interruption, "it's no use! He won't go to bed; he won't play keerds; whikee don't take no effect on him! Ever since I knowed him, he was the most unsatisfactory critter to hev round——"

"What do you have him round for, then?" interrupted Miss Jinny, sharply.

Mr. McClosky's eyes fell. "Ef he hedn't kem out of his way to-night to do me a good turn, I wouldn't ask ye, Jinny. I wouldn't, so help me! But I thought, ez I couldn't do anything with him, you might come down, and sorter fetch him, Jinny, as you did the others."

Miss Jinny shrugged her pretty shoulders.

"Is he old, or young?"

"He's young enough, Jinny; but he knows a power of things."

"What does he do?"

"Not much, I reckon. He's got money in the mill at Four Forks. He travels round a good deal. I've heard, Jinny, that he's a poet—writes them rhymes, you know." Mr. McClosky here appealed submissively but directly to his daughter. He remembered that she had frequently been in receipt of printed elegaic couplets known as "mottoes" containing inclosures equally saccharine.

Miss Jinny slightly curled her pretty lip. She had that fine contempt for the illusions of fancy which belongs to the perfectly healthy young animal.

"Not," continued Mr. McClosky, rubbing his head reflectively, "not ez I'd advise ye, Jinny, to say anything about poetry. It ain't twenty minutes ago ez I did. I set the whiskey afore him in the parlour. I wound up the music-box, and set it goin'. Then I sez to him sociable-like and free, 'Jest consider yourself in your own house, and repeat what you allow to be your finest production,' and he raged. That man, Jinny, jest raged! Thar's no end of the names he called me. You see, Jinny," continued Mr. McClosky, apologetically, "he's known me a long time."

But his daughter had already dismissed the

question with her usual directness. "I'll be down in a few moments, father," she said, after a pause, "but don't say anything to him about it—don't say I was abed."

Mr. McClosky's face beamed. "You was allers a good girl, Jinny," he said, dropping on one knee, the better to imprint a respectful kiss on her forehead. But Jinny caught him by the wrists, and for a moment held him captive. "Father," said she, trying to fix his shy eyes with the clear, steady glance of her own, "all the girls that were there to-night had someone with them. Mame Robinson had her aunt; Lucy Rance had her mother; Kate Pierson had her sister—all, except me, had some other woman. Father dear," her lip trembled just a little, "I wish mother hadn't died when I was so small. I wish there was some other woman in the family besides me. I ain't lonely with you, father dear; but if there was only some one, you know, when the time comes for John and me——"

Her voice here suddenly gave out, but not her brave eyes, that were still fixed earnestly upon his face. Mr. McClosky, apparently tracing out a pattern on the bed-quilt, essayed words of comfort.

"Thar ain't one of them gals ez you've named, Jinny, ez could do what you've done, with a whole Noah's ark of relations at their backs! Thar ain't one ez wouldn't sacrifice her nearest relation to

make the strike that you hev. Ez to mothers, maybe, my dear, you're doin' better without one." He rose suddenly, and walked towards the door. When he reached it, he turned, and, in his old deprecating manner, said, "Don't be long, Jinny," smiled, and vanished from the head downward, his canvas slippers asserting themselves resolutely to the last.

When Mr. McClosky reached his parlour again, his troublesome guest was not there. The decanter stood on the table untouched; three or four books lay upon the floor; a number of photographic views of the Sierras were scattered over the sofa; two sofa-pillows, a newspaper, and a Mexican blanket lay on the carpet, as if the late occupant of the room had tried to read in a recumbent position. A French window opening upon a verandah, which never before in the history of the house had been unfastened, now betrayed by its waving lace-curtain the way that the fugitive had escaped. Mr. McClosky heaved a sigh of despair. He looked at the gorgeous carpet purchased in Sacramento at a fabulous price, at the crimson satin and rosewood furniture unparalleled in the history of Tuolumne, at the massively framed pictures on the walls, and looked beyond it, through the open window, to the reckless man, who, fleeing these sybaritic allurements, was smoking a cigar upon the moonlit road.

This room, which had so often awed the youth of Tuolumne into filial respect, was evidently a failure. It remained to be seen if the "Rose" herself had lost her fragrance. "I reckon Jinny will fetch him yet," said Mr. McClosky, with parental faith.

He stepped from the window upon the verandah ; but he had scarcely done this, before his figure was detected by the stranger, who at once crossed the road. When within a few feet of McClosky, he stopped. "You persistent old plantigrade !" he said in a low voice, audible only to the person addressed, and a face full of affected anxiety ; "why don't you go to bed ? Didn't I tell you to go and leave me here alone ? In the name of all that's idiotic and imbecile, why do you continue to shuffle about here ? Or are you trying to drive me crazy with your presence, as you have with that wretched music-box that I've just dropped under yonder tree ? It's an hour and a half yet before the stage passes ; do you think, do you imagine for a single moment, that I can tolerate you until then, eh ? Why don't you speak ? Are you asleep ? You don't mean to say that you have the audacity to add somnambulism to your other weaknesses ? You're not low enough to repeat yourself under any such weak pretext as that, eh ?"

A fit of nervous coughing ended this extraordinary exordium ; and half sitting, half leaning against the



verandah, Mr. McClosky's guest turned his face and part of a slight elegant figure towards his host. The lower portion of this upturned face wore an habitual expression of fastidious discontent, with an occasional line of physical suffering. But the brow above was frank and critical; and a pair of dark, mirthful eyes sat in playful judgment over the supersensitive mouth and its suggestion.

"I allowed to go to bed, Ridgeway," said Mr. McClosky, meekly; "but my girl Jinny's jist got back from a little tear up at Robinson's, and ain't inclined to turn in yet. You know what girls is. So I thought we three would jist have a social chat together to pass away the time."

"You mendacious old hypocrite! She got back an hour ago," said Ridgeway, "as that savage looking escort of hers, who has been haunting the house ever since, can testify. My belief is that, like an enterprising idiot as you are, you've dragged that girl out of her bed, that we might mutually bore each other."

Mr. McClosky was too much stunned by this evidence of Ridgeway's apparently superhuman penetration to reply. After enjoying his host's confusion for a moment with his eyes, Ridgeway's mouth asked grimly:—

"And who is this girl, anyway?"

"Nancy's."

"Your wife's?"

"Yes. But look yar, Ridgeway," said McClosky, laying one hand imploringly on Ridgeway's sleeve, "not a word about her to Jinny. She thinks her mother's dead—died in Missouri. Eh!"

Ridgeway nearly rolled from the verandah in an excess of rage. "Good God! Do you mean to say that you have been concealing from her a fact that any day, any moment, may come to her ears? That you've been letting her grow up in ignorance of something that by this time she might have outgrown and forgotten. That you have been, like a besotted old ass, all these years slowly forging a thunderbolt that anyone may crush her with? That"—but here Ridgeway's cough took possession of his voice and even put a moisture into his dark eyes, as he looked at McClosky's aimless hand feebly employed upon his beard.

"But," said McClosky, "look how she's done. She's held her head as high as any of 'em. She's to be married in a month to the richest man in the country; and," he added, cunningly, "Jack Ashe ain't the kind o' man to sit by and hear anything said of his wife or her relations, you bet! But hush—that's her foot on the stairs. She's cummin'."

She came. I don't think the French window ever held a finer view than when she put aside the curtains, and stepped out. She had dressed her-

self simply and hurriedly, but with a woman's knowledge of her best points; so that you got the long curves of her shapely limbs, the shorter curves of her round waist and shoulders, the long sweep of her yellow braids, the light of her grey eyes, and even the delicate rose of her complexion, without knowing how it was delivered to you.

The introduction by Mr. McClosky was brief. When Ridgeway had got over the fact that it was two o'clock in the morning, and that the cheek of this Tuolumne goddess nearest him was as dewy and fresh as an infant's, that she looked like Marguerite, without, probably ever having heard of Goethe's heroine, he talked, I dare say, very sensibly. When Miss Jinny—who from her childhood had been brought up among the sons of Anak, and who was accustomed to have the supremacy of our noble sex presented to her as a physical fact—found herself in the presence of a new and strange power in the slight and elegant figure beside her, she was at first frightened and cold. But finding that this power, against which the weapons of her own physical charms were of no avail, was a kindly one, albeit general, she fell to worshipping it, after the fashion of woman, and casting before it the fetishes and other idols of her youth. She even confessed to it. So that, in half an hour, Ridgeway was in possession of all the facts connected with her life,

and a great many, I fear, of her fancies—except one. When Mr. McClosky found the young people thus amicably disposed, he calmly went to sleep.

It was a pleasant time to each. To Miss Jinny it had the charm of novelty; and she abandoned herself to it, for that reason, much more freely and innocently than her companion, who knew something more of the inevitable logic of the position. I do not think, however, he had any intention of love-making. I do not think he was at all conscious of being in the attitude. I am quite positive he would have shrunk from the suggestion of disloyalty to the one woman whom he admitted to himself he loved. But, like most poets, he was much more true to an idea than a fact, and having a very lofty conception of womanhood, with a very sanguine nature, he saw in each new face the possibilities of a realisation of his ideal. It was, perhaps an unfortunate thing for the woman, particularly as he brought to each trial a surprising freshness, which was very deceptive, and quite distinct from the *blasé* familiarity of the man of gallantry. It was this perennial virginity of the affections that most endeared him to the best women, who were prone to exercise towards him a chivalrous protection—as of one likely to go astray, unless looked after—and indulged in the dangerous combination of sentiment with the highest maternal

instincts. It was this quality which caused Jinny to recognise in him a certain boyishness that required her womanly care, and even induced her to offer to accompany him to the cross-roads when the time for his departure arrived. With her superior knowledge of woodcraft and the locality, she would have kept him from being lost. I wot not but that she would have protected him from bears or wolves; but chiefly, I think, from the feline fascinations of Mame Robinson and Lucy Rance, who might be lying in wait for this tender young poet. Nor did she cease to be thankful that Providence had, so to speak, delivered him as a trust into her hands.

It was a lovely night. The moon swung low, and languished softly on the snowy ridge beyond. There were quaint odours in the still air; and a strange incense from the woods perfumed their young blood, and seemed to swoon in their pulses. Small wonder that they lingered on the white road, that their feet climbed unwillingly the little hill where they were to part, and that, when they at last reached it, even the saving grace of speech seemed to have forsaken them.

For there they stood alone. There was no sound nor motion in earth, or woods, or heaven. They might have been the one man and woman for whom this goodly earth that lay at their feet, rimmed

with the deepest azure, was created. And, seeing this, they turned towards each other with a sudden instinct, and their hands met, and then their lips in one long kiss.

And then out of the mysterious distance came the sound of voices, and the sharp clatter of hoofs and wheels, and Jinny slid away—a white moon-beam—from the hill. For a moment she glimmered through the trees, and then, reaching the house, passed her sleeping father on the verandah, and darting into her bedroom, locked the door, threw open the window, and falling on her knees beside it leaned her hot cheeks upon her hands and listened. In a few moments she was rewarded by the sharp clatter of hoofs on the stony road, but it was only a horseman, whose dark figure was swiftly lost in the shadows of the lower road. At another time she might have recognised the man; but her eyes and ears were now all intent on something else. It came presently with dancing lights, a musical rattle of harness, a cadence of hoof-beats, that set her heart to beating in unison—and was gone. A sudden sense of loneliness came over her, and tears gathered in her sweet eyes.

She arose, and looked around her. There was the little bed, the dressing-table, the roses that she had worn last night, still fresh and blooming in the

little vase. Everything was there, but everything looked strange. The roses should have been withered, for the party seemed so long ago. She could hardly remember when she had worn this dress that lay upon the chair. So she came back to the window, and sank down beside it with her cheek, a trifle paler, leaning on her hand, and her long braids reaching to the floor. The stars paled slowly, like her cheek; yet with eyes that saw not, she still looked from her window for the coming dawn.

It came, with violet deepening into purple, with purple flushing into rose, with rose shining into silver, and glowing into gold. The straggling line of black picket-fence below, that had faded away with the stars, came back with the sun. What was that object moving by the fence? Jinny raised her head, and looked intently. It was a man endeavouring to climb the pickets, and falling backward with each attempt. Suddenly she started to her feet, as if the rosy flushes of the dawn had crimsoned her from forehead to shoulders; then she stood, white as the wall, with her hands clasped upon her bosom; then with a single bound, she reached the door, and with flying braids and fluttering skirts, sprang down the stairs and out to the garden walk. When within a few feet of the fence she uttered a cry, the first she had given—the cry of a mother

over her stricken babe, of a tigress over her mangled cub; and in another moment she had leaped the fence, and knelt beside Ridgeway, with his fainting head upon her breast.

"My boy, my poor, poor boy! who has done this?"

Who, indeed? His clothes were covered with dust; his waistcoat was torn open; and his handkerchief, wet with the blood it could not stanch, fell from a cruel stab beneath his shoulder.

"Ridgeway, my poor boy, tell me what has happened."

Ridgeway slowly opened his heavy blue-veined lids, and gazed upon her. Presently a gleam of mischief came into his dark eyes, a smile stole over his lips as he whispered slowly:—

"It—was—your kiss—did it, Jinny dear! I had forgotten—how high-priced the article was here. Never mind Jinny!"—he feebly raised her hand to his white lips,—“it was—worth it,” and fainted away.

Jinny started to her feet, and looked wildly around her. Then with a sudden resolution, she stooped over the insensible man, and with one strong effort lifted him in her arms as if he had been a child. When her father, a moment later, rubbed his eyes and awoke from his sleep upon the verandah, it was to see a goddess, erect and



triumphant, striding towards the house with the helpless body of a man lying across that breast where man had never lain before—a goddess, at whose imperious mandate he arose, and cast open the doors before her. And then, when she had laid her unconscious burden on the sofa, the goddess fled; and a woman, helpless and trembling, stood before him—a woman that cried out that she had “killed him,” that she was “wicked, wicked!” and that, even saying so, staggered, and fell beside her late burden. And all that Mr. McClosky could do was to feebly rub his beard, and say to himself, vaguely and incoherently, that “Jinny had fetched him.”

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## CHAPTER II.

BEFORE noon the next day, it was generally believed throughout Four Forks that Ridgeway Dent had been attacked and wounded at Chemisal Ridge by a highwayman, who fled on the approach of the Wingdam coach. It is to be presumed that this statement met with Ridgeway's approval, as he did not contradict it, nor supplement it with any details. His wound was severe, but not dangerous. After the first excitement had subsided, there was, I think, a prevailing impression common to the provincial

mind that his misfortune was the result of the defective moral quality of his being a stranger, and was, in a vague sort of a way, a warning to others and a lesson to him. "Did you hear how that San Francisco feller was took down the other night?" was the average tone of introductory remark. Indeed, there was a general suggestion that Ridgeway's presence was one that no self-respecting, high-minded highwayman, honourably conservative of the best interests of Tuolumne County, could for a moment tolerate.

Except for the few words spoken on that eventful morning, Ridgeway was reticent of the past. When Jinny strove to gather some details of the affray that might offer a clue to his unknown assailant, a subtle twinkle in his brown eyes was the only response. When Mr. McClosky attempted the same process, the young gentleman threw abusive epithets, and eventually slippers, teaspoons, and other lighter articles within the reach of an invalid, at the head of his questioner. "I think he's coming round, Jinny," said Mr. McClosky; "he laid for me this morning with a candlestick."

It was about this time that Miss Jinny, having sworn her father to secrecy regarding the manner in which Ridgeway had been carried into the house, conceived the idea of addressing the young man as "Mr. Dent" and of apologising for intruding

whenever she entered the room in the discharge of her household duties. It was about this time that she became more rigidly conscientious to those duties, and less general in her attentions. It was at this time that the quality of the invalid's diet improved, and that she consulted him less frequently about it. It was about this time that she began to see more company, that the house was greatly frequented by her former admirers, with whom she rode, walked, and danced. It was at about this time also, and when Ridgeway was able to be brought out on the verandah in a chair, that with great archness of manner, she introduced to him Miss Lucy Ashe, the sister of her betrothed, a flashing brunette and terrible heart-breaker of Four Forks. And in the midst of this gaiety she concluded that she would spend a week with the Robinsons, to whom she owed a visit. She enjoyed herself greatly there, so much, indeed, that she became quite hollow-eyed; the result, as she explained to her father, of a too frequent indulgence in festivity. "You see, father, I won't have many chances after John and I are married; you know how queer he is, and I must make the most of my time." And she laughed an odd little laugh which had lately become habitual to her.

"And how is Mr. Dent getting on?" Her father replied that he was getting on very well

indeed ; so well, in fact, that he was able to leave for San Francisco two days ago. "He wanted to be remembered to you, Jinny—'remembered kindly'—yes, they is the very words he used," said Mr. McClosky, looking down and consulting one of his large shoes for corroboration. Miss Jinny was glad to hear that he was so much better. Miss Jinny could not imagine anything that pleased her more than to know that he was so strong as to be able to rejoin his friends again, who must love him so much and be so anxious about him. Her father thought she would be pleased, and, now that he was gone, there was really no necessity for her to hurry back. Miss Jinny, in a high metallic voice, did not know that she had expressed any desire to stay ; still if her presence had become distasteful at home, if her own father was desirous of getting rid of her, if, when she was so soon to leave his roof for ever, he still begrudged her those few days remaining, if—

„My God, Jinny, so help me!" said Mr. McClosky, clutching despairingly at his beard, "I didn't go for to say anything of the kind. I thought that you——"

"Never mind, father," interrupted Jinny, magnanimously, "you misunderstood me ; of course you did, you couldn't help it—you're a MAN!"

Mr. McClosky, sorely crushed, would have

vaguely protested ; but his daughter having relieved herself after the manner of her sex, with a mental personal application of an abstract statement, forgave him with a kiss.

Nevertheless, for two or three days after her return, Mr. McClosky followed his daughter about the house with yearning eyes, and occasionally with timid, diffident feet. Sometimes he came upon her suddenly at her household tasks with an excuse so palpably false, and a careless manner so outrageously studied, that she was fain to be embarrassed for him. Later, he took to rambling about the house at night, and was often seen noiselessly passing and repassing through the hall after she had retired. On one occasion he was surprised, first by sleep and then by the early-rising Jinny, as he lay on the rug outside her chamber door.

"You treat me like a child, father," said Jinny.

"I thought, Jinny," said the father apologetically,—"I thought I heard sounds as if you was takin' on inside, and listenin' I fell asleep."

"You dear, old simple-minded baby !" said Jinny, looking past her father's eyes and lifting his grizzled locks one by one with meditative fingers: "what should I be takin' on for? Look how much taller I am than you !" she said, suddenly lifting herself up to the extreme of her superb figure. Then rubbing his head rapidly with both hands, as if she

were anointing his hair with some rare unguent, she patted him on the back, and returned to her room. The result of this and one or two other equally sympathetic interviews was to produce a change in Mr. McClosky's manner, which was, if possible, still more discomposing. He grew unjustifiably hilarious, cracked jokes with the servants, and repeated to Jinny humorous stories, with the attitude of facetiousness carefully preserved throughout the entire narration, and the point utterly ignored and forgotten. Certain incidents reminded him of funny things, which invariably turned out to have not the slightest relevancy or application. He occasionally brought home with him practical humorists, with a sanguine hope of setting them going, like the music-box, for his daughter's edification. He essayed the singing of melodies with great freedom of style, and singular limitation of note. He sang "Come haste to the wedding, ye lasses and maidens," of which he knew a single line, and that incorrectly, as being particularly apt and appropriate. Yet away from the house and his daughter's presence he was silent and distraught. His absence of mind was particularly noted by his workmen at the Empire Quartz-mill. "Ef the old man don't look out and wake up," said his foreman, "he'll hev them feet of his yet under the stamps. When he ain't givin' his mind to em' they is altogether too promiskuss."

A few nights later, Miss Jinny recognised her father's hand in a timid tap at the door. She opened it, and he stood before her, with a valise in his hand, equipped as for a journey. "I takes the stage to-night, Jinny dear, from Four Forks to 'Frisco. Maybe, I may drop in on Jack afore I go. I'll be back in a week. Good-bye."

"Good-bye." He still held her hand. Presently he drew her back into the room, closing the door carefully, and glancing around. There was a look of profound cunning in his eye as he said slowly:—

"Bear up, and keep dark, Jinny dear, and trust to the old man. Various men has various ways. Thar is ways as is common, and ways as is uncommon; ways as is easy, and ways as is oneasy. Bear up, and keep dark." With this Delphic utterance he put his finger to his lips, and vanished.

It was ten o'clock when he reached Four Forks. A few minutes later he stood on the threshold of that dwelling described by the Four Forks "Sentinel" as "the palatial residence of John Ashe," and known to the local satirist as the "ashe-box."

"Hevin' to lay by two hours, John," he said to his prospective son-in-law, as he took his hand at the door, "a few words of social converse, not on business, but strictly private, seems to be about as nat'ral a thing as a man can do."

This introduction, evidently the result of some

study, and plainly committed to memory, seemed so satisfactory to Mr. McClosky, that he repeated it again, after John Ashe had led him into his private office, where, depositing his valise in the middle of the floor, and sitting down before it, he began carefully to avoid the eye of his host. John Ashe, a tall, dark, handsome Kentuckian, with whom even the trifles of life were evidently full of serious import, waited with a kind of chivalrous respect, the further speech of his guest. Being utterly devoid of any sense of the ridiculous, he always accepted Mr. McClosky as a grave fact, singular only from his own want of experience of the class.

"Ores is running light now," said Mr. McClosky with easy indifference.

John Ashe returned that he had noticed the same fact in the receipts of the mill at Four Forks.

Mr. McClosky rubbed his beard, and looked at his valise, as if for sympathy and suggestion.

"You don't reckon on having any trouble with any of them chaps as you cut out with Jinny?"

John Ashe, rather haughtily, had never thought of that. "I saw Rance hanging round your house the other night when I took your daughter home; but he gave me a wide berth," he added, carelessly.

"Surely," said Mr. McClosky, with a peculiar winking of the eye. After a pause, he took a fresh departure from his valise.



"A few words, John, ez between man and man, ez between my daughter's father and her husband who expects to be, is about the thing, I take it, as is fair and square. I kem here to say them They're about Jinny, my gal."

Ashe's grave face brightened, to Mr. Mc Closky's evident discomposure.

"Maybe, I should have said about her mother but the same bein' a stranger to you, I says naterally, 'Jinny.'"

Ashe nodded courteously. Mr. Mc Closky with his eyes on his valise, went on:—

"It is sixteen year ago as I married Mrs. McClosky in the State of Missouri. She let on, at the time, to be a widder,—a widder with one child. When I say let on, I mean to imply that I subsekently found out that she was not a widder, nor a wife; and the father of the child was, so to speak, unbeknownst. That child was Jinny—my gal."

With his eyes on his valise, and quietly ignoring the wholly crimsoned face and swiftly darkening brow of his host, he continued:—

"Many little things sorter tended to make our home in Missouri onpleasant. A disposition to smash furniture and heave knives around; an inclination to howl when drunk, and that frequent; a habitooal use of vulgar language, and a tendency to cuss the casooal visitor,—seemed to pint," added

Mr. McClosky with submissive hesitation, "That—she—was—so to speak—quite unsuited to the marriage relation in its holiest aspect."

"Confound it! why didn't——" burst out John Ashe, erect and furious.

"At the end of two year," continued Mr. McClosky, still intent on the valise, "I allowed I'd get a divorce. Et about thet time, however, Providence sends a circus into thet town, and a feller as rode three horses to onct. Hevin allez a taste for athletic sports, she left town with this feller, leavin' me and Jinny behind. I sent word to her thet, if she would give Jinny to me, we'd call it quits. And she did."

"Tell me," gasped Ashe, "did you ask your daughter to keep this from me, or did she do it of her own accord?"

"She doesn't know it," said Mr. McClosky. "She thinks I'm her father, and that her mother's dead."

"Then, sir, this is your——"

"I don't know," said Mr. McClosky, slowly, "ez I've asked anyone to marry my Jinny. I don't know ez I've persood that ez a business, or even taken it up as a healthful recreation."

John Ashe paced the room furiously. Mr. McClosky's eyes left the valise, and followed him curiously. "Where is this woman?" demanded

Ashe, suddenly. Mr. McClosky eyes sought the valise again.

"She went to Kansas; from Kansas she went into Texas; from Texas she eventooally came to Californy. Being here, I've purvided her with money, when her business was slack, through a friend."

John Ashe groaned. "She's gettin' rather old and shaky for hosses, and now does the tight-rope business and flying trapeze. Never hevin' seen her perform," continued Mr. McClosky with conscientious caution, "I can't say how she gets on. On the bills she looks well. Thar is a poster," said Mr. McClosky glancing at Ashe, and opening his valise,— "thar is a poster givin' her performance at Marysville next month." Mr. McClosky slowly unfolded a large yellow-and-blue printed poster, profusely illustrated. "She calls herself 'Mams'elle J. Miglawski, the great Russian Trapeziste.'"

John Ashe tore it from his hand. "Of course," he said, suddenly facing Mr. McClosky, "you don't expect me to go on with this?"

Mr. McClosky took up the poster, carefully refolded it, and returned it to his valise. "When you break off with Jinny," he said, quietly, "I don't want anything said 'bout this. She doesn't know it. She's a woman and I reckon your a white man."

"But what am I to say? How am I to go back of my word?"

"Write her a note. Say something hez come to your knowledge (don't say what) that makes you break it off. You needn't be afeard Jenny 'll ever ask you what."

John Ashe hesitated. He felt he had been cruelly wronged. No gentleman, no Ashe, could go on further in this affair. It was preposterous to think of it. But somehow, he felt at the moment very unlike a gentleman or an Ashe, and was quite sure he should break down under Jinny's steady eyes. But then—he could write to her.

"So ores is about as light here as on the Ridge. Well, I reckon they'll come up before the rains. Good-night." Mr. McClosky took the hand that his host mechanically extended, shook it gravely and was gone.

When Mr. McClosky a week later stepped again upon his own verandah, he saw through the French window the figure of a man in his parlour. Under his hospitable roof the sight was not unusual; but for an instant a subtle sense of disappointment thrilled him. When he saw it was not the face of Ashe turned towards him he was relieved; but when he saw the tawny beard, and quick, passionate eyes of Henry Rance he felt a new sense of appre-

hension, so that he fell to rubbing his beard almost upon his very threshold.

Jinny ran into the hall, and seized her father with a little cry of joy. "Father," said Jinny, in a hurried whisper, "don't mind *him*," indicating Rance with a toss of her yellow braids; "he's going soon. And *I* think father, I've done him wrong. But it's all over with John and me now. Read that note, and see how he's insulted me." Her lip quivered; but she went on, "It's Ridgeway that he means, father; and I believe it was *his* hand struck Ridgeway down, or that he knows who did. But hush now; not a word."

She gave him a feverish kiss, and glided back into the parlour, leaving Mr. McClosky perplexed and irresolute, with the note in his hand. He glanced at it hurriedly, and saw that it was couched in almost the very words he had suggested. But a sudden, apprehensive recollection came over him. He listened; and with an exclamation of dismay he seized his hat and ran out of the house, but too late. At the same moment a quick nervous footstep was heard upon the verandah; the French window flew open, and with a light laugh of greeting Ridgeway stepped into the room.

Jinny's firer ear first caught the step. Jinny's swifter feelings had sounded the depths of hope, of joy, of despair, before he entered the room. Jinny's

pale face was the only one that met his, self-possessed and self-reliant, when he stood before them. An angry flush suffused even the pink roots of Rance's beard as he rose to his feet. An ominous fire sprang into Ridgeway's eyes, and a spasm of hate and scorn passed over the lower part of his face and left the mouth and jaw immobile and rigid.

Yet he was the first to speak. "I owe you an apology," he said to Jinny, with a suave scorn that brought the indignant blood back to her cheek, "for this intrusion; but I ask no pardon for withdrawing from the only spot where that man dare confront me with safety."

With an exclamation of rage, Rance sprang towards him. But as quickly Jinny stood between them, erect and menacing. "There must be no quarrel here," she said to Rance. "While I protect your right as my guest, don't oblige me to remind you of mine as your hostess." She turned with a half-deprecatory air to Ridgeway; but he was gone. So was her father. Only Rance remained, with a look of ill-concealed triumph on his face.

Without looking at him she passed towards the door. When she reached it she turned. "You asked me a question an hour ago. Come to me in the garden at nine o'clock to-night and I will answer you. But promise me first to keep away from

Mr. Dent. Give me your word not to seek him—to avoid him if he seeks you. Do you promise? It is well.”

He would have taken her hand; but she waved him away. In another moment he heard the swift rustle of her dress in the hall, the sound of her feet upon the stair, the sharp closing of her bedroom door, and all was quiet.

And even thus quietly the day wore away, and the night rose slowly from the valley and overshadowed the mountains with purple wings that fanned the still air into a breeze, until the moon followed it and lulled everything to rest as with the laying on of white and benedictory hands. It was a lovely night; but Henry Rance, waiting impatiently beneath a sycamore at the foot of the garden, saw no beauty in the earth or air or sky. A thousand suspicions common to a jealous nature, a vague suspicion of the spot filled his mind with distrust and doubt. “If this should be a trick to keep my hands off this insolent pup!” he muttered. But even as the thought passed his tongue a white figure slid from the shrubbery near the house, glided along the line of picket-fence, and then stopped midway motionless in the moonlight.

It was she. But he scarcely recognised her in the white drapery that covered her head and shoulders and breast. He approached her with a

hurried whisper. "Let us withdraw from the moonlight. Everybody can see us here,"

"We have nothing to say that cannot be said in the moonlight, Henry Rance," she replied, coldly receding from his proffered hand. She trembled for a moment as if with a chill, and then suddenly turned upon him. "Hold up your head, and let me look at you! I've known only what men are: let me see what a traitor looks like!"

He recoiled more from her wild face than her words. He saw from the first that her hollow cheeks and hollow eyes were blazing with fever. He was no coward; but he would have fled.

"You are ill, Jinny," he said; "you had best return to the house. Another time——"

"Stop!" she cried, hoarsely. "Move from this spot, and I'll call for help! Attempt to leave me now, and I'll proclaim you the assassin that you are!"

"It was a fair fight," he said, doggedly.

"Was it a fair fight to creep behind an unarmed and unsuspecting man? Was it a fair fight to try to throw suspicion on someone else? Was it a fair fight to deceive me? Liar and coward that you are!"

He made a stealthy step toward her with evil eyes, and a wickeder hand that crept within his breast. She saw the motion; but it only stung her to newer fury.



"Strike!" she said, with blazing eyes, throwing her hands open before him. "Strike! Are you afraid of the woman who dares you? Or do you keep your knife for backs of unsuspecting men? Strike, I tell you! No? Look then!"

With a sudden movement she tore from her head and shoulders the thick lace shawl that had concealed her figure, and stood before him. "Look!" she cried, passionately, pointing to the bosom and shoulders of her white dress, darkly streaked with faded stains and ominous discolouration,—“look! This the dress I wore that morning when I found him lying here—*here*—bleeding from your cowardly knife. Look! Do you see? This is his blood—my darling boy's blood—one drop of which, dead and faded as it is; is more precious to me than the whole living pulse of any other man. Look! I come to you to-night, christened with his blood, and dare you to strike,—dare you to strike him again through me, and mingle my blood with his. Strike, I implore you! Strike! if you have any pity on me! Strike! if you are a man! Look! Here lay his head on my shoulder; here I held him to my breast, where never—another man—Ah!”—

She reeled against the fence, and something that had flashed in Rance's hand dropped at her feet; for another flash and report rolled him over in the

dust ; and across his writhing body two men strode, and caught her ere she fell.

"She has only fainted," said Mr. McClosky. "Jinny dear, my girl, speak to me!"

"What is this on her dress?" said Ridgeway, kneeling beside her, and lifting his set and colourless face. At the sound of his voice, the colour came faintly back to her cheek : she opened her eyes, and smiled.

"It's only your blood, dear boy," she said ; "but look a little deeper, and you'll find my own."

She put up her two yearning hands, and drew his face and lips down to her own. When Ridgeway raised his head again, her eyes were closed ; but her mouth still smiled as with the memory of a kiss.

They bore her to the house, still breathing, but unconscious. That night the road was filled with clattering horsemen ; and the summoned skill of the countryside for leagues away, gathered at her couch. The wound, they said, was not essentially dangerous ; but they had grave fears of the shock to a system that already seemed suffering from some strange and unaccountable nervous exhaustion. The best medical skill of Tuolumne happened to be young and observing, and waited patiently an opportunity to account for it. He was presently rewarded.

For towards morning she rallied, and looked feebly around. Then she beckoned her father towards her, and whispered, "Where is he?"

"They took him away, Jinny dear, in a cart. He won't trouble you agin." He stopped; for Miss Jinny had raised on her elbow, and was levelling her black brows at him. But two kicks from the young surgeon, and a significant motion towards the door, sent Mr. McClosky away muttering. "How should I know that *'he'* meant Ridgeway?" he said, apologetically, as he went and returned with the young gentleman. The surgeon, who was still holding her pulse, smiled, and thought that—with a little care—and attention—the stimulants — might be — diminished — and — he might leave—the patient for some hours with perfect safety. He would give further directions to Mr. McClosky—downstairs.

It was with great archness of manner that, half an hour later, Mr. McClosky entered the room with a preparatory cough; and it was with some disappointment that he found Ridgeway standing quietly by the window, and his daughter apparently fallen into a light doze. He was still more concerned when, after Ridgeway had retired, noticing a pleasant smile playing about her lips, he said, softly—

"You was thinking of someone, Jinny?"

"Yes, father," the grey eyes met his steadily—"of poor John Ashe!

Her recovery was swift. Nature, that had seemed to stand jealously aloof from her in her mental anguish, was kind to the physical hurt of her favourite child. The superb physique, which had been her charm and her trial, now stood her in good stead. The healing balsam of the pine, the balm of resinous gums, and the rare medicaments of Sierran altitudes, touched her as it might have touched the wounded doe; so that in two weeks she was able to walk about. And when, at the end of the month, Ridgeway returned from a flying visit to San Francisco, and jumped from the Wingdam coach at four o'clock in the morning, the Rose of Tuolumne, with the dewy petals of either cheek fresh as when first unfolded to his kiss, confronted him on the road.

With a common instinct, their young feet both climbed the little hill now sacred to their thought. When they reached its summit. they were both, I think, a little disappointed. There is a fragrance in the unfolding of a passion that escapes the perfect flower. Jinny thought the night was not as beautiful; Ridgeway, that the long ride had blunted his perceptions. But they had the frankness to confess it to each other, with the rare delight of such a confession, and the comparison of details

which they thought each had forgotten. And with this, and an occasional pitying reference to the blank period when they had not known each other, hand in hand they reached the house.

Mr. McClosky was awaiting them impatiently upon the verandah. When Miss Jinny had slipped upstairs to replace a collar that stood somewhat suspiciously awry, Mr. McClosky drew Ridgeway solemnly aside. He held a large theatre poster in one hand, and an open newspaper in the other.

"I allus said," he remarked, slowly, with the air of merely renewing a suspended conversation,— "I allus said that riding three horses at onct wasn't exactly in her line. It would seem that it ain't. From remarks in this yer paper, it would appear that she tried it on at Marysville last week, and broke her neck.





## MY FRIEND, THE TRAMP.



HAD been sauntering over the clover downs of a certain noted New England seaport. It was a Sabbath morning, so singularly reposeful and gracious, so replete with the significance of the seventh day of rest, that even the Sabbath bells ringing a mile away over the salt marshes had little that was monitory, mandatory, or even supplicatory in their drowsy voices. Rather they seemed to call from their cloudy towers, like some renegade muezzin: "Sleep is better than prayer; sleep on, O sons of the Puritans! Slumber still, O deacons and vestrymen; Let, oh let those feet that are swift to wickedness curl up beneath thee! those palms that are itching for the shekels of the ungodly lie clasped beneath thy pillow! Sleep is better than prayer."

And, indeed, though it was high morning, sleep was still in the air. Wrought upon at last by the combined influences of sea and sky and atmosphere, I succumbed, and lay down on one of the boulders

of a little stony slope that gave upon the sea. The great Atlantic lay before me, not yet quite awake, but slowly heaving the rhythmical expiration of slumber. There was no sail visible in the misty horizon, There was nothing to do but to lie and stare at the unwinking ether.

Suddenly I became aware of the strong fumes of tobacco. Turning my head, I saw a pale blue smoke curling up from behind an adjacent boulder. Rising, and climbing over the intermediate granite, I came upon a little hollow, in which, comfortably extended on the mosses and lichens, lay a powerfully-built man. He was very ragged ; he was very dirty ; there was a strong suggestion about him of his having too much hair, too much nail, too much perspiration ; too much of those superfluous excrescences and exudations that society and civilisation strive to keep under. But it was noticeable that he had not much of anything else. It was The Tramp.

With that swift severity with which we always visit rebuke upon the person who happens to present any one of our vices offensively before us, in his own person, I was deeply indignant at his laziness. Perhaps I showed it in my manner, for he rose to a half-sitting attitude, returned my stare apologetically, and made a movement towards knocking the fire from his pipe against the granite.

“Shure, sir, and if I'd belaved that I was tris-

passin' on yer honour's grounds, it's meself that would hev laid down on the say shore and taken the salt waves for me blankits. But its sivinteen miles I've walked this blessed noight, with nothin' to sustain me, and hevin' a mortal weakness to fight wid in my bowels, by reason of starvation, and only a bit o' baccy that the Widdy Maloney giv' me at the cross roads, to kape me up entoirely. But it was the dark day I left me home in Milwaukee to walk to Boston; and if ye'll oblige a lone man who has left a wife and six children in Milwaukee, wid the loan of twenty-five cints, furninst the time he gits worruk, God'll be good to ye."

It instantly flashed through my mind that the man before me had the previous night partaken of the kitchen hospitality of my little cottage, two miles away. That he presented himself in the guise of a distressed fisherman, mulcted of his wages by an inhuman captain; that he had a wife lying sick of consumption in the next village, and two children, one of whom was a cripple, wandering in the streets of Boston. I remembered that this tremendous indictment against Fortune touched the family, and that the distressed fisherman was provided with clothes, food, and some small change. The food and small change had disappeared, but the garments for the consumptive wife, where were they? He had been using them for a pillow.



I instantly pointed out this fact, and charged him with the deception. To my surprise, he took it quietly, and even a little complacently.

"Bedad, yer roight ; ye see, sur" (confidentially), "ye see, sur, until I get worruk—and its worruk I'm lukin' for—I have to desave now and thin to shute the locality, Ah, God save us ! but on the say-coast thay'r that har-rud upon thim that don't belong to the say."

I ventured to suggest that a strong, healthy man like him might have found work somewhere between Milwaukee and Boston.

"Ah, but ye see I got free passage on a freight train, and didn't shtop. It was in the Aist that I expected to find worruk."

"Have you any trade ?"

"Trade, is it ? I'm a brickmaker, God knows, and many's the lift I've had at makin' bricks in Milwaukee. Shure I've as aisy a hand at it as any man. Maybe yer honour might know of a kil, hereabout ?"

Now to my certain knowledge, there was not a brick kiln within fifty miles of that spot, and of all unlikely places to find one would have been this sandy peninsula, given up to the summer residences of a few wealthy people. Yet I could not help admiring the assumption of the scamp, who knew this fact as well as myself. But I said, "I can give

you work for a day or two ;” and, bidding him gather up his sick wife’s apparel, led the way across the downs to my cottage. At first I think the offer took him by surprise, and gave him some consternation, but he presently recovered his spirits, and almost instantly his speech. “Ah, worruk, is it? God be praised! its meself that’s ready and willin’ Though maybe me hand is spoilt wid brickmakin’.”

I assured him that the work I would give him would require no delicate manipulation, and so we fared on over the sleepy downs, But I could not help noticing that, although an invalid, I was a much better pedestrian than my companion, frequently leaving him behind, and that even as a “tramp,” he was etymologically an impostor. He had a way of lingering beside the fences we had to climb over, as if to continue more confidentially the history of his misfortunes and troubles, which he was delivering to me during our homeward walk, and I noticed that he could seldom resist the invitation of a mossy boulder or a tussock of salt grass. “Ye see, sur,” he would say, suddenly sitting down, “it’s along uv me misfortunes beginnin’ in Milwaukee that”—and it was not until I was out of hearing that he would languidly gather his traps again and saunter after me. When I reached my own garden gate he leaned for a moment over

it, with both of his powerful arms extended downward, and said, "Ah, but it's a blessin' that Sunday comes to give rest fur the wake and the weary, and them as walks sivinteen miles to get it." Of course I took the hint. There was evidently no work to be had from my friend, the Tramp, that day. Yet his countenance brightened as he saw the limited extent of my domain, and observed that the garden, so called, was only a flower bed about twenty-five feet by ten. As he had doubtless before this been utilised, to the extent of his capacity, in digging, he had probably expected that kind of work; and I daresay I discomfited him by pointing him to an almost levelled stone wall, about twenty feet long, with the remark that his work would be the rebuilding of that stone wall, with stone brought from the neighbouring slopes. In a few moments he was comfortably provided for in the kitchen, where the cook, a woman of his own nationality, apparently "chaffed" him with a raillery that was to me quite unintelligible. Yet I noticed that when, at sunset, he accompanied Bridget to the spring for water, ostentatiously flourishing the empty bucket in his hand, when they returned in the gloaming, Bridget was carrying the water, and my friend, the Tramp, was some paces behind her, cheerfully "colloquing," and picking blackberries.

At seven the next morning he started in cheerfully to work. At nine, a.m., he had placed three large stones on the first course in position, an hour having been spent in looking for a pick and hammer, and in the incidental "chaffing" with Bridget. At ten o'clock I went to overlook his work; it was a rash action, as it caused him to respectfully doff his hat, discontinue his labours, and lean back against the fence in cheerful and easy conversation.

"Are you fond uv blackberries, Captain?" I told him that the children were in the habit of getting them from the meadow beyond, hoping to stop the suggestion I knew was coming. "Ah, but, Captain, it's meself that with wanderin' and havin' nothin' to pass me lips but the berries I'd pick from the hedges,—it's meself knows where to find thim. Sure it's yer childer, and foin boys they are, Captain, that's besaching me to go wid 'em to the place, known't only to meself." It is unnecessary to say that he triumphed. After the manner of vagabonds of all degrees, he had enlisted the women and children on his side—and my friend, the Tramp, had his own way. He departed at eleven, and returned at four p.m., with a tin dinner-pail half filled. On interrogating the boys it appeared that they had had a "bully time," but on cross-examination it came out that *they* had picked the berries. From four to six, three more stones were laid, and the

arduous labours of the day were over. As I stood looking at the first course of six stones, my friend, the Tramp, stretched his strong arms out to their fullest extent and said: "Ay, but it's worruk that's good for me; give me worruk, and it's all I'll be askin' fur."

I ventured to suggest that he had not yet accomplished much.

"Wait till to-morrow. Ay, but ye'll see thin. It's me hand that's yet onaisy wid brick-makin' and sthrange to the sthones. An' ye'll wait till to-morrow?"

Unfortunately I did not wait. An engagement took me away at an early hour, and when I rode up to my cottage at noon my eyes were greeted with the astonishing spectacle of my two boys hard at work laying the courses of the stone wall, assisted by Bridget and Norah, who were dragging stones from the hillside, while comfortably stretched on the top of the wall lay my friend, the Tramp, quietly overseeing the operation with lazy and humorous comment. For an instant I was foolishly indignant, but he soon brought me to my senses. "Shure, sur, it's only larnin' the boys the habits uv indushtry I was—and may they niver know, be the same token, what it is to worruk for the bread betune their lips. Shure it's but makin' 'em think it play I was. As fur the colleens beyint in the

kitchen, sure isn't it bettther they was helping your honour here than colloguing with themselves inside?"

Nevertheless, I thought it expedient to forbid henceforth any interruption of servants or children with my friend's "worruk." Perhaps it was the result of this embargo that the next morning early the Tramp wanted to see me.

"And it's sorry I am to say it to ye, sur," he began, "but it's the handlin' of this stun that's desthroyin' me touch at the brick makin', and it's better I should lave ye and find worruk at me own thrade. For its worruk I am nadin' It isn't me-self, Captain, to ate the bread of oidleness here. And so good-bye to ye, and if its fifty cints ye can be givin' me ontill I find a kill—it's meself that'll repay ye."

He got the money. But he got also conditionally a note from me to my next neighbour, a wealthy retired physician, possessed of a large domain, a man eminently practical and business-like in his management of it. He employed many labourers on the sterile waste he called his "farm," and it occurred to me that if there really was any work in my friend, the Tramp, which my own indolence and pre-occupation had failed to bring out, he was the man to do it.

I met him a week after. It was with some embarrassment that I enquired after my friend, the Tramp.

"Oh, yes," he said, reflectively, "let's see: he came on Monday and left me on Thursday. He was, I think, a stout, strong man, a well-meaning, good-humoured fellow, but afflicted with a most singular variety of diseases. The first day I put him at work in the stables he developed chills and fever caught in the swamps of Louisiana"—

"Excuse me," I said hurriedly, "you mean in Milwaukee!"

"I know what I'm talking about," returned the Doctor, testily; "he told me his whole wretched story—his escape from the Confederate service, the attack upon him by armed negroes, his concealment in the bayous and swamps"—

"Go on, doctor," I said, feebly; "you were speaking of his work."

"Yes. Well, his system was full of malaria; the first day I had him wrapped up in blankets, and dosed with quinine. The next day he was taken with all the symptoms of cholera morbus, and I had to keep him up on brandy and capsicum. Rheumatism set in on the following day, and incapacitated him for work, and I concluded I had better give him a note to the director of the City Hospital than keep him here. As a pathological study he was good; but as I was looking for a man to help about the stable, I couldn't afford to keep him in both capacities."

As I never could really tell when the Doctor was in joke or in earnest, I dropped the subject. And so my friend, the Tramp, gradually faded from my memory, not however without leaving behind him in the barn where he had slept a lingering flavour of whisky, onions, and fluffiness. But in two weeks this had gone, and the "Shebang" (as my friends irreverently termed my habitation) knew him no more. Yet it was pleasant to think of him as having at last found a job at brick-making, or having returned to his family at Milwaukee, or making his Louisiana home once more happy with his presence, or again tempting the fish-producing main—this time with a noble and equitable captain.

It was a lovely August morning when I rode across the sandy peninsula to visit a certain noted family, whereof all the sons were valiant and the daughters beautiful. The front of the house was deserted, but on the rear verandah I heard the rustle of gowns, and above it arose what seemed to be the voice of Ulysses, reciting his wanderings. There was no mistaking that voice, it was my friend, the Tramp!

From what I could hastily gather from his speech, he had walked from St. John, N. B., to rejoin a distressed wife in New York, who was, however, living with opulent but objectionable relatives. "An Shure, miss, I wouldn't be askin' ye the loan of a



cint if I could get worruk at me trade of carpet-wavin'—and maybe ye know of some manufacthory where they wave carpets beyant here. Ah, miss, and if ye don't give me a cint, it's enough for the loikes of me to know that me troubles has brought the tears in the most beautiful oiyes in the wurruled, and bless ye for it, miss!"

Now I knew that the Most Beautiful Eyes in the World belonged to one of the most sympathetic and tenderest hearts in the world, and I felt that common justice demanded my interference between it and one of the biggest scamps in the world. So, without waiting to be announced by the servant, I opened the door, and joined the group on the verandah.

If I expected to touch the conscience of my friend, the Tramp, by a dramatic entrance, I failed utterly; for no sooner did he see me, than he instantly gave vent to a howl of delight, and, falling on his knees before me, grasped my hand, and turned oratorically to the ladies.

"Oh, but it's himself—himself that has come as a witness to my carrakther! Oh, but it's himself that lifted me four wakes ago, when I was lyin' with a mortal wakeness on the say-coast, and tuk me to his house. Oh, but it's himself that shupported me over the faldes, and whin the chills and faver came on me and I shivered wid the cold, it was

himself, bless him! as shtripped the coat off his back, an giv' it me, sayin', 'Take it, Dinnis, it's shtarved with the cowld say air ye'll be entoirely.' Ah, but look at him—will ye, Miss! Look at his swate, modist face—a-blushin' like your own, miss. Ah! look at him will ye? He'll be denyin' of it in a minit—may the blessin' uv Heaven folly him. Look at him, miss! Ah, but it's a swate pair ye'd make! (the rascal knew I was a married man.) Ah, miss, if you could see him wroightin' day and night with such an illigant hand of his own—(he had evidently believed from the gossip of my servants that I was a professor of chirography)—if ye could see him, miss, as I have, ye'd be proud of him."

He stopped out of breath. I was so completely astounded I could say nothing: the tremendous indictment I had framed to utter as I opened the door vanished completely. And as the Most Beautiful Eyes in the Wurruld turned gratefully to mine—well—

I still retained enough principle to ask the ladies to withdraw, while I would take upon myself the duty of examining into the case of my friend, the Tramp, and giving him such relief as was required. (I did not know until afterwards, however, that the rascal had already despoiled their scant purses of three dollars and fifty cents.) When the door was closed upon them I turned upon him.

"You infernal rascal!"

"Ah, Captain, and would ye be refusin' *me* a carrakther and me givin' *ye* such a one as Oi did! Save us! but if ye'd only hav' seen the luk that the purty one give ye. Well, before the chills and faver bruk me spirits entirely, when I was a young man, and makin' me tin dollars a week brick-makin', it's meself that wud hav' given"—

"I consider," I broke in, "that a dollar is a fair price for your story, and as I shall have to take it all back and expose you before the next twenty-four hours pass, I think you had better hasten to Milwaukee, New York, or Louisiana."

I handed him the dollar. "Mind, I don't want to see your face again."

"Ye wun't, Captain."

And I did not.

But it so chanced that later in the season, when the migratory inhabitants had flown to their hot-air registers in Boston and Providence, I breakfasted with one who had lingered. It was a certain Boston lawyer,—replete with principle, honesty, self-discipline, statistics, æsthetics, and a perfect consciousness of possessing all these virtues, and a full recognition of their market values. I think he tolerated me as a kind of foreigner, gently but firmly waiving all argument on any topic, frequently distrusting my facts, generally my deductions, and always my ideas.

In conversation he always appeared to descend only halfway down a long moral and intellectual staircase, and always delivered his conclusions over the balusters.

I had been speaking of my friend, the Tramp. "There is but one way of treating that class of impostors; it is simply to recognize the fact that the law calls him a 'vagrant,' and makes his trade a misdemeanour. Any sentiment on the other side renders you *particeps criminis*. I don't know but an action would lie against you for encouraging tramps. Now, I have an efficacious way of dealing with these gentry." he rose and took a double-barrelled fowling-piece from the chimney. "When a tramp appears on my property, I warn him off. If he persists, I fire at him—as I would on any criminal trespasser."

"Fire on him?" I echoed in alarm.

"Yes—but *with powder only!* Of course *he* doesn't know that. But he doesn't come back."

It struck me for the first time that possibly many other of my friend's arguments might be only blank cartridges, and used to frighten off other trespassing intellects.

"Of course, if the tramp still persisted, I would be justified in using shot. Last evening I had a visit from one. He was coming over the wall. My shot gun was efficacious; you should have seen him run!"

It was useless to argue with so positive a mind, and I dropped the subject. After breakfast I strolled over the downs, my friend promising to join me as soon as he arranged some household business.

It was a lovely, peaceful morning, not unlike the day when I first met my friend, the Tramp. The hush of the great benediction lay on land and sea. A few white sails twinkled afar, but sleepily; one or two large ships were creeping in lazily, like my friend, the Tramp. A voice behind me startled me.

My host had rejoined me. His face, however, looked a little troubled.

"I just now learned something of importance," he began. "It appears that with all my precautions that Tramp has visited my kitchen, and the servants have entertained him. Yesterday morning, it appears, while I was absent, he had the audacity to borrow my gun to go duck-shooting. At the end of two or three hours he returned with two ducks and—the gun."

"That was, at least, honest."

"Yes—but! That fool of a girl says that, as he handed back the gun, he told her it was all right, and that he had loaded it up again to save the master trouble."

I think I showed my concern in my face, for he added, hastily: "it was only duck-shot; a few wouldn't hurt him!"

Nevertheless, we both walked on in silence for a moment.

"I thought the gun kicked a little," he said at last, musingly; "but the idea of—Hallo! what's this?"

He stopped before the hollow where I had first seen my Tramp. It was deserted, but on the mosses there were spots of blood and fragments of an old gown, blood-stained, as if used for bandages. I looked at it closely; it was the gown intended for the consumptive wife of my friend, the Tramp.

But my host was already nervously tracking the bloodstains that on rock, moss, and boulder were steadily leading towards the sea. When I overtook him at last on the shore, he was standing before a flat rock, on which lay a bundle I recognised, tied up in an handkerchief, and a crooked grape-vine stick.

"he may have come here to wash his wounds—salt is a styptic," said my host, who had recovered his correct precision of statement.

I said nothing, but looked towards the sea. Whatever secret lay hid in its breast, it kept it fast. Whatever its calm eyes had seen that summer night, it gave no reflection now. It lay there passive, imperturbable, and reticent. But my friend, the Tramp, was gone!



## THE FOOL OF FIVE FORKS.



HE lived alone. I do not think this peculiarity arose from any wish to withdraw his foolishness from the rest of the camp, nor was it probable that the combined wisdom of Five Forks ever drove him into exile. My impression is that he lived alone from choice—a choice he made long before the camp indulged in any criticism of his mental capacity. He was much given to moody reticence, and, although to outward appearances a strong man, was always complaining of ill-health. Indeed, one theory of his isolation was that it afforded him better opportunities for taking medicine, of which he habitually consumed large quantities.

His folly first dawned upon Five Forks through the post-office windows. He was, for a long time, the only man who wrote home by every mail; his letters being always directed to the same person—a woman. Now it so happened that the bulk of the

Five Forks correspondence was usually the other way. There were many letters received (the majority being in the female hand), but very few answered. The men received them indifferently, or as a matter of course. A few opened and read them on the spot, with a barely repressed smile of self-conceit, or quite as frequently glanced over them with undisguised impatience. Some of the letters began with, "My dear husband;" and some were never called for. But the fact that the only regular correspondent of Five Forks never received any reply became at last quite notorious. Consequently, when an envelope was received, bearing the stamp of the "Dead-Letter Office," addressed to the "Fool," under the more conventional title of "Cyrus Hawkins," there was quite a fever of excitement. I do not know how the secret leaked out; but it was eventually known to the camp that the envelope contained Hawkins's own letters returned. This was the first evidence of his weakness. Any man who repeatedly wrote to a woman who did not reply must be a fool. I think Hawkins suspected that his folly was known to the camp; but he took refuge in symptoms of chills and fever, which he at once developed, and effected a diversion with three bottles of Indian cholagogue and two boxes of pills. At all events, at the end of a week he resumed a pen stiffened by tonics, with all his



old epistolatory pertinacity. This time the letters had a new address.

In those days a popular belief obtained in the mines that luck particularly favoured the foolish and unscientific. Consequently, when Hawkins struck a "pocket" in the hillside near his solitary cabin there was but little surprise. "He will sink it all in the next hole" was the prevailing belief, predicated upon the usual manner in which the possessor of "nigger luck" disposed of his fortune. To everybody's astonishment, Hawkins, after taking out about eight thousand dollars, and exhausting the pocket, did not prospect for another. The camp then waited patiently to see what he would do with his money. I think, however, that it was with the greatest difficulty their indignation was kept from taking the form of a personal assault when it became known that he had purchased a draft for eight thousand dollars in favour of "that woman." More than this, it was finally whispered that the draft was returned to him as his letters had been, and that he was ashamed to reclaim the money at the Express Office. "It wouldn't be a bad spekilation to go East, get some smart gal, for a hundred dollars, to dress herself up and represent that 'Hag,' and just freeze onto that eight thousand," suggested a far-seeing financier. I may state here, that we always alluded to Hawkins's fair un-

known as the "Hag" without having, I am confident, the least justification for that epithet.

That the "Fool" should gamble seemed eminently fit and proper. That he should occasionally win a large stake, according to that popular theory which I have recorded in the preceding paragraph, appeared, also, a not improbable or inconsistent fact. That he should, however, break the faro bank which Mr. John Hamblin had set up in Five Forks, and carry off a sum variously estimated at from ten to twenty thousand dollars, and not return the next day, and lose the money at the same table, really appeared incredible. Yet such was the fact. A day or two passed without any known investment of Mr. Hawkins's recently acquired capital. "Ef he allows to send it to that 'Hag,'" said one prominent citizen, "suthin' ought to be done. It's jest ruinin' the reputation of this yer camp—this sloshin' around o' capital on non-residents ez don't claim it!" "It's settin' an example o' extravagance," said another, "ez is little better nor a swindle. Thar's mor'n five men in this camp thet, hearin' thet Hawkins hed sent home eight thousand dollars, must jest rise up and send home their hard earnings too! And then to think thet thet eight thousand was only a bluff, after all, and thet it's lyin' there on call in Adams and Co.'s bank! Well, I say it's one o' them things a vigilance committee oughter look into."

When there seemed no possibility of this repetition of Hawkins's folly, the anxiety to know what he had really done with his money became intense. At last a self-appointed committee of four citizens dropped artfully, but to outward appearances carelessly, upon him in his seclusion. When some polite formalities had been exchanged, and some easy vituperation of a backward season offered by each of the parties, Tom Wingate approached the subject.

"Sorter dropped heavy on Jack Hamlin the other night, didn't ye? He allows you didn't give him no show for revenge. I said you wasn't no such fool; didn't I, Dick?" continued the artful Wingate, appealing to a confederate.

"Yes," said Dick, promptly. "You said twenty thousand dollars wasn't goin' to be thrown around recklessly. You said Cyrus had suthin' better to do with his capital," superadded Dick, with gratuitous mendacity. "I disremember now what partickler investment you said he was goin' to make with it," he continued, appealing with easy indifference to his friend.

Of ccourse Wingate did not reply, but looked at the "Fool," who, with a troubled face, was rubbing his legs softly. After a pause, he turned deprecatingly towards his visitors.

"Ye didn't enny of ye ever hev a sort of tremblin

in your legs, a kind o' shakiness from the knee down? Suthin'," he continued, slightly brightening with his topic,—“suthin' that begins like chills, and yet ain't chills? A kind o' sensation of gone-ness here, and a kind o' feelin' as if you might die suddint? when Wright's Pills don't somehow reach the spot, and quinine don't fetch you?”

“No!” said Wingate, with a curt directness, and the air of authoritatively responding for his friends,—“no, never had. You was speakin' of this yer investment.”

“And your bowels all the time irregular?” continued Hawkins, blushing under Wingate's eye, and yet clinging despairingly to his theme, like a shipwrecked mariner to his plank.

Wingate did not reply, but glanced significantly at the rest. Hawkins evidently saw this recognition of his mental deficiency, and said, apologetically, “You was saying suthin' about my investment?”

“Yes,” said Wingate, so rapidly as to almost take Hawkins's breath away,—“the investment you made in——”

“Rafferty's Ditch,” said the “Fool,” timidly.

For a moment the visitors could only stare blankly at each other. “Rafferty's Ditch,” the one notorious failure of Five Forks!—Rafferty's Ditch, the impracticable scheme of an utterly unpractical man!—Rafferty's Ditch, a ridiculous plan for taking

water that could not be got to a place where it wasn't wanted!—Rafferty's Ditch, that had buried the fortunes of Rafferty and twenty wretched stockholders in its muddy depths!

"And thet's it, is it?" said Wingate, after a gloomy pause. "Thet's it! I see it all now, boys. That's how ragged Pat Rafferty went down to San Francisco yesterday in storeclothes, and his wife and four children went off in a kerridge to Sacramento. Thet's why them ten workmen of his, ez hadn't a cent to bless themselves with, was playin billiards last night, and eatin' isters. Thet's whar that money kum frum,—one hundred dollars to pay for the long advertisement of the new issue of Ditch stock in the *Times* yesterday. Thet's why them six strangers were booked at the Magnolia Hotel yesterday. Don't you see? It's thet money—and that 'Fool'!"

The "Fool" sat silent. The visitors rose without a word.

"You never took any of them Indian Vegetable Pills?" asked Hawkins, timidly, of Wingate.

"No!" roared Wingate, as he opened the door.

"They tell me that, took with the Panacea—they was out o' the Panacea when I went to the drug-store last week—they say that, took with the Panacea, they always effect a certin cure." But by this time, Wingate and his disgusted friends had

retreated, slamming the door on the "Fool" and his ailments.

Nevertheless, in six months the whole affair was forgotten; the money had been spent, the "Ditch" had been purchased by a company of Boston capitalists, fired by the glowing description of an Eastern tourist who had spent one drunken night at Five Forks; and I think even the mental condition of Hawkins might have remained undisturbed by criticism but for a singular accident.

It was during an exciting political campaign, when party feeling ran high, that the irascible Captain McFadden of Sacramento visited Five Forks. During a heated discussion in the Prairie Rose Saloon, words passed between the captain and the Hon. Calhoun Bungstarter, ending in a challenge. The captain bore the infelicitous reputation of being a notorious duellist and a dead-shot. The captain was unpopular. The captain was believed to have been sent by the opposition for a deadly purpose; and the captain was, moreover, a stranger. I am sorry to say that with Five Forks this latter condition did not carry the quality of sanctity or reverence that usually obtains among other nomads. There was, consequently, some little hesitation when the captain turned upon the crowd, and asked for someone to act as his friend. To everybody's astonishment, and to the indigna-

tion of many, the "Fool" stepped forward and offered himself in that capacity. I do not know whether Capt. McFadden would have chosen him voluntarily; but he was constrained, in the absence of a better man, to accept his services.

The duel never took place. Preliminaries were all arranged, the spot indicated; the men were present with their seconds; there was no interruption from without; there was no explanation or apology passed—but the duel did not take place. It may be readily imagined that these facts, which were all known to Five Forks, threw the whole community into a fever of curiosity. The principals, the surgeon, and one second left town the next day. Only the "Fool" remained. *He* resisted all questioning, declaring himself held in honour not to divulge; in short, conducted himself with consistent but exasperating folly. It was not until six months had passed, that Col. Starbottle, the second of Calhoun Bungstarter, in a moment of weakness, superinduced by the social glass, condescended to explain. I should not do justice to the parties if I did not give that explanation in the colonel's own words. I may remark, in passing, that the characteristic dignity of Col. Starbottle always became intensified by stimulants, and that, by the same process, all sense of humour was utterly eliminated.

"With the understanding that I am addressing myself confidentially to men of honour," said the colonel, elevating his chest above the bar-room counter of the Prairie Rose Saloon, "I trust that it will not be necessary for me to protect myself from levity, as I was forced to do in Sacramento on the only other occasion when I entered into an explanation of this delicate affair by — er — er — calling the individual to a personal account — er. I do not believe," added the colonel, slightly waving his glass of liquor in the air with a graceful gesture of courteous deprecation, "knowing what I do of the present company, that such a course of action is required here. Certainly not, sir, in the home of Mr. Hawkins—er—the gentleman who represented Mr. Bungstarter, whose conduct, ged, sir, is worthy of praise, blank me!"

Apparently satisfied with the gravity and respectful attention of his listeners, Col. Starbottle smiled relently and sweetly, closed his eyes half-dreamily, as if to recall his wandering thoughts, and began:—

"As the spot selected was nearest the tenement of Mr. Hawkins, it was agreed that the parties should meet there. They did so promptly at half-past six. The morning being chilly, Mr. Hawkins extended the hospitalities of his house with a bottle of Bourbon whiskey of which all partook but my-



self. The reason for that exception is, I believe, well known. It is my invariable custom to take brandy—a wineglassful in a cup of strong coffee—immediately on rising. It stimulates the functions, sir, without producing any blank derangement of the nerves.”

The barkeeper, to whom, as an expert, the colonel had graciously imparted this information, nodded approvingly; and the colonel, amid a breathless silence, went on.

“We were about twenty minutes in reaching the spot. The ground was measured, the weapons were loaded, when Mr. Bungstarter confided to me the information that he was unwell, and in great pain. On consultation with Mr. Hawkins, it appeared that his principal, in a distant part of the field, was also suffering, and in great pain. The symptoms were such as a medical man would pronounce ‘choleraic.’ I say *would* have pronounced; for, on examination, the surgeon was also found to be—er—in pain, and, I regret to say, expressing himself in language unbecoming the occasion. His impression was that some powerful drug had been administered. On referring the question to Mr. Hawkins, he remembered that the bottle of whiskey partaken by them contained a medicine which he had been in the habit of taking, but which, having failed to act upon him, he had concluded to be generally in-

effective, and had forgotten. His perfect willingness to hold himself personally responsible to each of the parties, his genuine concern at the disastrous effect of the mistake, mingled with his own alarm at the state of his system, which—er—failed to—er respond to the peculiar qualities of the medicine, was most becoming to him as a man of honour and a gentleman. After an hour's delay, both principals being completely exhausted, and abandoned by the surgeon, who was unreasonably alarmed at his own condition, Mr. Hawkins and I agreed to remove our men to Markleville. There, after a further consultation with Mr. Hawkins, an amicable adjustment of all difficulties, honourable to both parties, and governed by profound secrecy, was arranged. I believe," added the colonel, looking around and setting down his glass, "no gentleman has yet expressed himself other than satisfied with the result."

Perhaps it was the colonel's manner; but, whatever was the opinion of Five Forks regarding the intellectual display of Mr. Hawkins in this affair, there was very little outspoken criticism at the moment. In a few weeks the whole thing was forgotten, except as part of the necessary record of Hawkins's blunders, which was already a pretty full one. Again, some later follies conspired to obliterate the past, until, a year later, a valuable lead was

discovered in the "Blazing Star" tunnel, in the hill where he lived; and a large sum was offered him for a portion of his land on the hill-top. Accustomed as Five Forks had become to the exhibition of his folly, it was with astonishment that they learned that he resolutely and decidedly refused the offer. The reason that he gave was still more astounding—he was about to build.

To build a house upon property available for mining purposes was preposterous; to build at all, with a roof already covering him, was an act of extravagance; to build a house of the style he proposed was simply madness.

Yet here were facts. The plans were made, and the lumber for the new building was already on the ground, while the shaft of the "Blazing Star" was being sunk below. The site was, in reality, a very picturesque one, the building itself of a style and quality hitherto unknown in Five Forks. The citizens, at first sceptical, during their moments of recreation and idleness gathered doubtingly about the locality. Day by day, in that climate of rapid growths, the building, pleasantly known in the slang of Five Forks as the "Idiot Asylum," rose beside the green oaks and clustering firs of Hawkins Hill, as if it were part of the natural phenomena. At last it was completed. Then Mr. Hawkins proceeded to furnish it with an expensiveness and

extravagance of outlay quite in keeping with his former idiocy. Carpets, sofas, mirrors, and finally a piano—the only one known in the county, and brought at great expense from Sacramento—kept curiosity at a fever-heat. More than that, there were articles and ornaments which a few married experts declared only fit for women. When the furnishing of the house was complete—it had occupied two months of the speculative and curious attention of the camp—Mr. Hawkins locked the front door, put the key in his pocket, and quietly retired to his more humble roof, lower on the hillside.

I have not deemed it necessary to indicate to the intelligent reader all of the theories which obtained in Five Forks during the erection of the building. Some of them may be readily imagined. That the "Hag" had, by artful coyness and systematic reticence, at last completely subjugated the "Fool," and that the new house was intended for the nuptial bower of the (predestined) unhappy pair, was, of course, the prevailing opinion. But when, after a reasonable time had elapsed, and the house still remained untenanted, the more exasperating conviction forced itself upon the general mind that the "Fool" had been for the third time imposed upon—when two months had elapsed, and there seemed no prospect of a mistress for the new house

—I think public indignation became so strong that, had the "Hag" arrived, the marriage would have been publicly prevented. But no one appeared that seemed to answer to this idea of an available tenant; and all inquiry of Mr. Hawkins, as to his intention in building a house, and not renting it or occupying it, failed to elicit any further information. The reasons that he gave were felt to be vague, evasive, and unsatisfactory. He was in no hurry to move, he said. When he *was* ready, it surely was not strange that he should like to have his house all ready to receive him. He was often seen upon the verandah, of a summer evening, smoking a cigar. It is reported that one night the house was observed to be brilliantly lighted from garret to basement; that a neighbour, observing this, crept towards the open parlour window, and, looking in, espied the "Fool" accurately dressed in evening costume, lounging upon a sofa in the drawing-room, with the easy air of socially entertaining a large party. Notwithstanding this, the house was unmistakably vacant that evening, save for the presence of the owner, as the witness afterwards testified. When this story was first related, a few practical men suggested the theory that Mr. Hawkins was simply drilling himself in the elaborate duties of hospitality against a probable event in his history. A few ventured the

belief that the house was haunted. The imaginative editor of the *Five Forks Record* evolved from the depths of his professional consciousness a story that Hawkins's sweetheart had died, and that he regularly entertained her spirit in this beautifully furnished mausoleum. The occasional spectacle of Hawkins's tall figure pacing the verandah on moonlight nights lent some credence to this theory, until an unlooked-for incident diverted all speculation into another channel.

It was about this time that a certain wild, rude valley in the neighbourhood of Five Forks had become famous as a picturesque resort. Travellers had visited it, and declared that there were more cubic yards of rough stone cliff, and a waterfall of greater height, than any they had visited. Correspondents had written it up with extravagant rhetoric and inordinate poetical quotation. Men and women who had never enjoyed a sunset, a tree, or a flower, who had never appreciated the graciousness or meaning of the yellow sunlight that flecked their homely doorways, or the tenderness of a mid-summer's night, to whose moonlight they bared their shirt-sleeves or their *tulle* dresses, came from thousands of miles away to calculate the height of this rock, to observe the depth of this chasm, to remark upon the enormous size of this unsightly tree, and to believe with ineffable self-complacency

that they really admired nature. And so it came to pass that, in accordance with the tastes or weaknesses of the individual, the more prominent and salient points of the valley were christened; and there was a "Lace Handkerchief Fall," and the "Tears of Sympathy Cataract," and one distinguished orator's "Peak," and several "Mounts" of various noted people, living or dead, and an "Exclamation-Point," and a "Valley of Silent Adoration." And in course of time empty sodawater bottles were found at the base of the cataract, and greasy newspapers, and fragments of ham sandwiches, lay at the dusty roots of giant trees. With this, there were frequent irruptions of closely shaven and tightly cravated men, and delicate, flower-faced women, in the one long street of Five Forks, and a scampering of mules, and an occasional procession of dusty brown-linen cavalry.

A year after Hawkins's "Idiot Asylum" was completed, one day there drifted into the valley a riotous cavalcade of "school-marms," teachers of the San Francisco public schools, out for a holiday. Not severely-spectacled Minervas, and chastely armed and mailed Pallases, but, I fear, for the security of Five Forks, very human, charming, and mischievous young women. At least so the men thought, working in the ditches, and tunneling on the hillside; and when, in the interests of science,

and the mental advancement of juvenile posterity, it was finally settled that they should stay in Five Forks two or three days for the sake of visiting the various mines, and particularly the "Blazing Star" tunnel, there was some flutter of masculine anxiety. There was a considerable inquiry for "store-clothes," a hopeless overhauling of old and disused raiment, and a general demand for "boiled shirts" and the barber.

Meanwhile, with that supreme audacity and impudent hardihood of the sex when gregarious, the school-marms rode through the town admiring openly the handsome faces and manly figures that looked up from the ditches, or rose behind the cars of ore at the mouths of tunnels. Indeed, it is alleged that Jenny Forester, backed and supported by seven other equally shameless young women, had openly and publicly waved her handkerchief to the florid Hercules of Five Forks, one Tom Flynn, formerly of Virginia, leaving that good-natured but not over bright giant pulling his blonde moustaches in bashful amazement.

It was a pleasant June afternoon that Miss Milly Arnot, principal of the primary department of one of the public schools of San Francisco, having evaded her companions, resolved to put into operation a plan which had lately sprung up in her courageous and mischief-loving fancy. With that



wonderful and mysterious instinct of her sex, from whom no secrets of the affections are hid, and to whom all hearts are laid open, she had heard the story of Hawkins's folly, and the existence of the "Idiot Asylum." Alone on Hawkins Hill she had determined to penetrate its seclusion. Skirting the underbush at the foot of the hill, she managed to keep the heaviest timber between herself and the "Blazing Star" tunnel at its base, as well as the cabin of Hawkins, half-way up the ascent, until by a circuitous route at last she reached, unobserved, the summit. Before her, rose silent, darkened, and motionless, the object of her search. Here her courage failed her, with all the characteristic inconsequence of her sex. A sudden fear of all the dangers she had safely passed—bears, tarantulas, drunken men, and lizards—came upon her. For a moment, as she afterwards expressed it, "she thought she should die." With this belief, probably, she gathered three large stones, which she could hardly lift, for the purpose of throwing a great distance; put two hair-pins in her mouth, and carefully readjusted with both hands two stray braids of her lovely blueblack mane, which had fallen in gathering the stones. Then she felt in the pockets of her linen duster for her card-case, handkerchief, pocket-book, and smelling-bottle, and, finding them intact, suddenly assumed an air of easy, ladylike unconcern,

went up the steps of the verandah, and demurely pulled the front door-bell, which she knew would not be answered. After a decent pause, she walked around the encompassing verandah, examining the closed shutters of the French windows until she found one that yielded to her touch. Here she paused again to adjust her coquettish hat by the mirror-like surface of the long sash-window, that reflected the full length of her pretty figure. And then she opened the window and entered the room.

Although long closed, the house had a smell of newness and of fresh paint that was quite unlike the mouldiness of the conventional haunted house. The bright carpets, the cheerful walls, the glistening oilcloths, were quite inconsistent with the idea of a ghost. With childish curiosity, she began to explore the silent house, at first timidly—opening the doors with a violent push, and then stepping back from the threshold to make good a possible retreat—and then more boldly, as she became convinced of her security and absolute loneliness. In one of the chambers—the largest—there were fresh flowers in the vase, evidently gathered that morning; and, what seemed still more remarkable, the pitchers and ewers were freshly filled with water. This obliged Miss Milly to notice another singular fact, namely, that the house was free from dust, the one most

obtrusive and penetrating visitor of Five Forks. The floors and carpets had been recently swept, the chairs and furniture carefully wiped and dusted. If the house *was* haunted, it was possessed by a spirit who had none of the usual indifference to decay and mould. And yet the beds had evidently never been slept in; the very springs of the chair in which she sat creaked stiffly at the novelty; the closet-doors opened with the reluctance of fresh paint and varnish; and in spite of the warmth, cleanliness, and cheerfulness of furniture and decoration, there was none of the ease of tenancy and occupation. As Miss Milly afterwards confessed, she longed to "tumble things around;" and, when she reached the parlour or drawing-room again, she could hardly resist the desire. Particularly was she tempted by a closed piano that stood mutely against the wall. She thought she would open it just to see who was the maker. That done, it would be no harm to try its tone. She did so, with one little foot on the soft pedal. But Miss Milly was too good a player, and too enthusiastic a musician, to stop at half-measures. She tried it again, this time so sincerely that the whole house seemed to spring into voice. Then she stopped and listened. There was no response; the empty rooms seemed to have relapsed into their old stillness. She stepped out on the verandah. A woodpecker recommenced

his tapping on an adjacent tree ; the rattle of a cart in a rocky gulch below the hill came faintly up. No one was to be seen far or near. Miss Milly, reassured, returned. She again ran her fingers over the keys, stopped, caught at a melody running in her mind, half played it, and then threw away all caution. Before five minutes had elapsed, she had entirely forgotten herself, and with her linen duster thrown aside, her straw hat flung on the piano, her white hands bared, and a black loop of her braided hair hanging upon her shoulder, was fairly embarked upon a flowing sea of musical recollection.

She had played, perhaps, half an hour, when having just finished an elaborate symphony, and resting her hands on the keys, she heard very distinctly and unmistakably the sound of applause from without. In an instant the fires of shame and indignation leaped into her cheeks ; and she rose from the instrument, and ran to the window, only in time to catch sight of a dozen figures in blue and red flannel shirts vanishing hurriedly through the trees below.

Miss Milly's mind was instantly made up. I think I have already intimated that, under the stimulus of excitement, she was not wanting in courage ; and as she quietly resumed her gloves, hat, and duster, she was not perhaps exactly the

young person that it would be entirely safe for the timid, embarrassed, or inexperienced of my sex to meet alone. She shut down the piano; and having carefully reclosed all the windows and doors, and restored the house to its former desolate condition, she stepped from the verandah, and proceeded directly to the cabin of the unintellectual Hawkins, that reared its adobe chimney above the umbrage a quarter of a mile below.

The door opened instantly to her impulsive knock, and the "Fool of Five Forks" stood before her. Miss Milly had never before seen the man designated by this infelicitous title; and as he stepped backward, in half courtesy and half astonishment, she was, for the moment, disconcerted. He was tall, finely formed, and dark-bearded. Above cheeks a little hollowed by care and ill-health shone a pair of hazel eyes, very large, very gentle, but inexpressibly sad and mournful. This was certainly not the kind of man Miss Milly had expected to see; yet, after her first embarrassment had passed, the very circumstance, oddly enough, added to her indignation, and stung her wounded pride still more deeply. Nevertheless, the arch hypocrite instantly changed her tactics with the swift intuition of her sex.

"I have come," she said, with a dazzling smile, infinitely more dangerous than her former dignified

severity,—“I have come to ask your pardon for a great liberty I have just taken. I believe the new house above us on the hill is yours. I was so much pleased with its exterior that I left my friends for a moment below here,” she continued, artfully, with a slight wave of the hand, as if indicating a band of fearless Amazons without, and waiting to avenge any possible insult offered to one of their number, “and ventured to enter it. Finding it unoccupied, as I had been told, I am afraid I had the audacity to sit down and amuse myself for a few moments at the piano, while waiting for my friends.”

Hawkins raised his beautiful eyes to hers. He saw a very pretty girl, with frank grey eyes glistening with excitement, with two red, slightly freckled cheeks glowing a little under his eyes, with a short scarlet upper-lip turned back, like a rose leaf, over a little line of white teeth, as she breathed somewhat hurriedly in her nervous excitement. He saw all this calmly, quietly, and, save for the natural uneasiness of a shy, reticent man, I fear without a quickening of his pulse.

“I knowed it,” he said, simply. “I heerd ye as I kem up.”

Miss Milly was furious at his grammar, his dialect, his coolness, and still more, at the suspicion that he was an active member of her invisible *claque*.

“Ah!” she said, still smiling. “Then I think I heard *you*——”

"I reckon not," he interrupted, gravely. "I didn't stay long. I found the boys hanging round the house, and I allowed at first I'd go in and kinder warn you; but they promised to keep still; and you looked so comfortable, and wrapped up in your music, that I hadn't the heart to disturb you, and kem away. I hope," he added, earnestly, "they didn't let on ez they heerd you. They ain't a bad lot—them Blazin' Star boys—though they're a little hard at times. But they'd no more hurt ye than they would a—a—a cat!" continued Mr. Hawkins, blushing with a faint apprehension of the inelegance of his simile.

"No, no!" said Miss Milly, feeling suddenly very angry with herself, the "Fool," and the entire male population of Five Forks. "No! I have behaved foolishly, I suppose—and, if they *had*, it would have served me right. But I only wanted to apologise to you. You'll find everything as you left it. Good day!"

She turned to go. Mr. Hawkins began to feel embarrassed. "I'd have asked ye to sit down," he said, finally, "if it hed been a place fit for a lady. I oughter done so enny way. I don't know what kept me from it. But I ain't well, miss. Times I get a sort o' dumb ager—it's the ditches, I think, miss—and I don't seem to hev my wits about me."

Instantly Miss Arnot was all sympathy; her quick woman's heart was touched.

"Can I—can anything be done?" she asked, more timidly than she had before spoken.

"No—not unless ye remember suthin' about these pills." He exhibited a box containing about half a dozen. "I forget the direction—I don't seem to remember much, any way, these times. They're 'Jones's Vegetable Compound.' If ye've ever took 'em, ye'll remember whether the reg'lar dose is eight. They ain't but six here. But perhaps ye never tuk any," he added, deprecatingly.

"No," said Miss Milly, curtly. She had usually a keen sense of the ludicrous, but somehow, Mr. Hawkins's eccentricity only pained her.

"Will you let me see you to the foot of the hill?" he said again, after another embarrassing pause.

Miss Arnot felt instantly that such an act would condone her trespass in the eyes of the world. She might meet some of her invisible admirers, or even her companions; and, with all her erratic impulses, she was nevertheless a woman, and did not entirely despise the verdict of conventionality. She smiled sweetly, and assented; and in another moment the two were lost in the shadows of the wood.

Like many other apparently trivial acts in an un-



eventful life, it was decisive. As she expected, she met two or three of her late applauders, whom, she fancied, looked sheepish and embarrassed ; she met, also, her companions looking for her in some alarm, who really appeared astonished at her escort, and, she fancied, a trifle envious of her evident success. I fear that Miss Arnot, in response to their anxious inquiries, did not state entirely the truth, but without actual assertion, led them to believe that she had, at a very early stage of the proceeding, completely subjugated this weak-minded giant, and had brought him triumphantly to her feet. From telling this story two or three times, she got finally to believing that she had some foundation for it, then to a vague sort of desire that it would eventually prove to be true, and then to an equally vague yearning to hasten that consummation. That it would redound to any satisfaction of the "Fool" she did not stop to doubt. That it would cure him of his folly she was quite confident. Indeed, there are very few of us, men or women, who do not believe that even a hopeless love for ourselves is more conducive to the salvation of the lover than a requited affection for another.

The criticism of Five Forks was, as the reader may imagine, swift and conclusive. When it was found out that Miss Arnot was not the "Hag" masquerading as a young and pretty girl, to the

ultimate deception of Five Forks in general, and the "Fool" in particular, it was at once decided that nothing but the speedy union of the "Fool" and the "pretty school-marm" was consistent with ordinary common sense. The singular good-fortune of Hawkins was quite in accordance with the theory of his luck as propounded by the camp. That, after the "Hag" failed to make her appearance, he should "strike a lead" in his own house, without the trouble of "prospectin'," seemed to these casuists as a wonderful but inevitable law. To add to these fateful probabilities, Miss Arnot fell, and sprained her ankle, in the ascent of Mount Lincoln, and was confined for some weeks to the hotel after her companions had departed. During this period, Hawkins was civilly but grotesquely attentive. When, after a reasonable time had elapsed, there still appeared to be no immediate prospect of the occupancy of the new house, public opinion experienced a singular change in regard to its theories of Mr. Hawkins's conduct. The "Hag" was looked upon as a saint-like and long-suffering martyr to the weaknesses and inconsistency of the "Fool." That, after erecting this new house at her request, he had suddenly "gone back" on her; that his celibacy was the result of a long habit of weak proposal and subsequent shameless rejection; and that he was now trying his

hand on the helpless school-marm was perfectly plain to Five Forks. That he should be frustrated in his attempts at any cost was equally plain. Miss Milly suddenly found herself invested with a rude chivalry that would have been amusing, had it not been at times embarrassing; that would have been impertinent, but for the almost superstitious respect with which it was proffered. Every day somebody from Five Forks rode out to inquire the health of the fair patient.

"Hez Hawkins bin over yer to-day?" queried Tom Flynn, with artful ease and indifference, as he leaned over Miss Milly's easy-chair on the verandah.

Miss Milly, with a faint pink flush on her cheek, was constrained to answer, "No."

"Well, he sorter sprained his foot agin a rock yesterday," continued Flynn, with shameless untruthfulness. "You mus'n't think anything o' that Miss Arnot. He'll be over yer to-morrer; and meantime he told me to hand this yer bookay with his regards, and this yer specimen." And Mr. Flynn laid down the flowers he had picked *en route* against such an emergency, and presented respectfully a piece of quartz and gold, which he had taken that morning from his own sluice-box.

"You mus'n't mind Hawkins's ways, Miss Milly," said another sympathising miner. "There ain't a better man in camp than that theer Cy Hawkins

—but he don't understand the ways of the world with wimen. He hasn't mixed as much with society as the rest of us," he added, with an elaborate Chesterfieldian ease of manner; "but he means well."

Meanwhile, a few other sympathetic tunnel-men were impressing upon Mr. Hawkins the necessity of the greatest attention to the invalid. "It won't do, Hawkins," they explained, "to let that there gal go back to San Francisco and say that, when she was sick and alone, the only man in Five Forks under whose roof she had rested, and at whose table she had sat" (this was considered a natural but pardonable exaggeration of rhetoric) "ever threw off on her; and it shan't be done, It ain't the square thing to Five Forks." And then the "Fool" would rush away to the valley, and be received by Miss Milly with a certain reserve of manner that finally disappeared in a flush of colour, some increased vivacity, and a pardonable coquetry. And so the days passed. Miss Milly grew better in health, and more troubled in mind; and Mr. Hawkins became more and more embarrassed; and Five Forks smiled, and rubbed its hands, and waited for the approaching *dénoûment*. And then it came—but not, perhaps, in the manner that Five Forks had imagined.

It was a lovely afternoon in July that a party of

Eastern tourists rode into Five Forks. They had just "done" the Valley of Big Things; and, there being one or two Eastern capitalists among the party, it was deemed advisable that a proper knowledge of the practical mining resources of California should be added to their experience of the merely picturesque in nature. Thus far everything had been satisfactory; the amount of water which passed over the Fall was large, owing to a backward season; some snow still remained in the canons near the highest peaks; they had ridden round one of the biggest trees, and through the prostrate trunk of another. To say that they were delighted is to express feebly the enthusiasm of these ladies and gentlemen, drunk with the champagne hospitality of their entertainers, the utter novelty of scene, and the dry exhilarating air of the valley. One or two had already expressed themselves ready to live and die there; another had written a glowing account to the Eastern press, depreciating all other scenery in Europe and America; and, under these circumstances, it was reasonably expected that Five Forks would do its duty, and equally impress the stranger after its own fashion.

Letters to this effect were sent from San Francisco by prominent capitalists there; and, under the able superintendence of one of their agents,

the visitors were taken in hand, shown "what was to be seen," carefully restrained from observing what ought not to be visible, and so kept in a blissful and enthusiastic condition. And so the graveyard of Five Forks, in which but two of the occupants had died natural deaths—the dreary, ragged cabins on the hillsides, with their sad-eyed, cynical, broken-spirited occupants, toiling on day by day for a miserable pittance, and a fare that a self-respecting Eastern mechanic would have scornfully rejected—were not a part of the Eastern visitors' recollection. But the hoisting works and machinery of the "Blazing Star Tunnel Company" was,—the Blazing Star Tunnel Company, whose "gentlemanly superintendent" had received private information from San Francisco to do the "proper thing" for the party. Wherefore the valuable heaps of ore in the company's works were shown; the oblong bars of gold, ready for shipment, were playfully offered to the ladies who could lift and carry them away unaided; and even the tunnel itself, gloomy, fateful, and peculiar was shown as part of the experience; and, in the noble language of one correspondent, "The wealth of Five Forks, and the peculiar inducements that it offered to Eastern capitalists," were established beyond a doubt. And then occurred a little incident, which, as an unbiassed spectator, I am

free to say offered no inducements to anybody whatever, but which, for its bearing upon the central figure of this veracious chronicle, I cannot pass over.

It had become apparent to one or two more practical and sober-minded in the party, that certain portions of the "Blazing Star" tunnel (owing, perhaps, to the exigencies of a flattering annual dividend) were economically and imperfectly "shored" and supported, and were consequently unsafe, insecure, and to be avoided. Nevertheless, at a time when champagne corks were popping in dark corners, and enthusiastic voices and happy laughter rang through the half-lighted levels and galleries, there came a sudden and mysterious silence. A few lights dashed swiftly by in the direction of a distant part of the gallery, and then there was a sudden sharp issuing of orders, and a dull ominous rumble. Some of the visitors turned pale; one woman fainted.

Something had happened. What? "Nothing," (the speaker is fluent but uneasy)—"one of the gentlemen, in trying to dislodge a 'specimen' from the wall, had knocked away a support. There had been a 'cave'—the gentleman was caught, and buried below his shoulders. It was all right, they'd get him out in a moment—only it required great care to keep from extending the 'cave.' Didn't

know his name. It was that little man, the husband of that lively lady with the black eyes. Eh ! Hullo, there ! Stop her ! For Heaven's sake ! Not that way ! She'll fall from that shaft ! She'll be killed ! ”

But the lively lady had already gone. With staring black eyes, imploringly trying to pierce the gloom, with hands and feet that sought to batter and break down the thick darkness, with incoherent cries and supplications following the moving of *ignis fatuus* lights ahead, she ran, and ran swiftly !—ran over treacherous foundations, ran by yawning gulfs, ran past branching galleries and arches, ran wildly, ran despairingly, ran blindly, and at last ran into the arms of the “Fool of Five Forks.”

In an instant she caught at his hand. “Oh, save him !” she cried. “You belong here ; you know this dreadful place ; bring me to him. Tell me where to go, and what to do, I implore you ! Quick, he is dying ! Come ! ”

He raised his eyes to hers, and then, with a sudden cry, dropped the rope and crowbar he was carrying, and reeled against the wall.

“Annie !” he gasped slowly. “Is it you ? ”

She caught at both his hands, brought her face to his with staring eyes, murmured, “Heaven ! Cyrus ! ” and sank upon her knees before him.



He tried to disengage the hand that she wrung with passionate entreaty.

"No, no! Cyrus, you will forgive me—you will forget the past! Heaven has sent you here to-day. You will come with me. You will—you must—save him!"

"Save who?" cried Cyrus, hoarsely.

"My husband!"

The blow was so direct, so strong and overwhelming, that, even through her own stronger and more selfish absorption, she saw it in the face of the man, and pitied him.

"I thought—you—knew—it," she faltered.

He did not speak, but looked at her with fixed, dumb eyes. And then the sound of distant voices and hurrying feet started her again into passionate life. She once more caught his hand.

"Oh, Cyrus, hear me! If you have loved me through all these years, you will not fail me now. You must save him! You can! You are brave and strong—you always were, Cyrus. You will save him, Cyrus, for my sake, for the sake of your love for me! You will, I know it. Bless you!"

She rose as if to follow him; but, at a gesture of command, she stood still. He picked up the rope and crowbar slowly, and in a dazed, blinded way, that in her agony of impatience and alarm, seemed protracted to cruel infinity. Then he turned, and

raising her hand to his lips, kissed it slowly, looked at her again, and the next moment was gone.

He did not return; for at the end of the next half-hour when they laid before her the half-conscious, breathing body of her husband, safe and unharmed, but for exhaustion and some slight bruises, she learned that the worst fears of the workmen had been realised. In releasing him, a second "cave" had taken place. They had barely time to snatch away the helpless body of her husband, before the strong frame of his rescuer, Cyrus Hawkins, was struck and smitten down in his place.

For two hours he lay there, crushed and broken-limbed, with a heavy beam lying across his breast, in sight of all, conscious and patient. For two hours they had laboured around him, wildly, despairingly, hopefully, with the wills of gods and the strength of giants; and at the end of that time they came to an upright timber, which rested its base upon the beam. There was a cry for axes, and one was already swinging in the air, when the dying man called to them feebly,—

"Don't cut that upright!"

"Why?"

"It will bring down the whole gallery with it."

"How?"

"It's one of the foundations of my house."

The axe fell from the workman's hand, and with a blanched face he turned to his fellows. It was too true. They were in the uppermost gallery; and the "cave" had taken place directly below the new house. After a pause, the "Fool" spoke again more feebly.

"The lady—quick!"

They brought her—a wretched, fainting creature, with pallid face and streaming eyes—and fell back as she bent her face above him.

"It was built for you, Annie darling," he said, in a hurried whisper, "and has been waiting up there for you and me all these long days. It's deeded to you, Annie; and you must—live there—with *him*! He will not mind that I shall be always near you; for it stands above—my grave."

And he was right. In a few minutes later, when he had passed away, they did not move him, but sat by his body all night with a torch at his feet and head. And the next day they walled up the gallery as a vault; but they put no mark or any sign thereon, trusting rather to the monument that, bright and cheerful, rose above him in the sunlight of the hill. And those who heard the story said, "This is not an evidence of death and gloom and sorrow, as are other monuments, but is a sign of life and light and hope, wherefore shall all know that he who lies under it is what men call—'a fool.'"



## THE MAN OF NO ACCOUNT.

**H**IS name was Fagg,—David Fagg. He came to California in '52 with us, in the "Skyscraper." I don't think he did it in an adventurous way. He probably had no other place to go to. When a knot of us young fellows would recite what splendid opportunities we resigned to go, and how sorry our friends were to have us leave, and show daguerreotypes and locks of hair, and talk of Mary and Susan, the man of no account used to sit by and listen with a pained, mortified expression on his plain face, and say nothing. I think he had nothing to say. He had no associates except when we patronised him; and, in point of fact, he was a good deal of sport to us. He was always sea-sick whenever we had a capful of wind. He never got his sea-legs on either. And I never shall forget how we all laughed when Rattler took him the piece of pork on a string—and— But you know that time-honoured joke.

And then we had such a splendid lark with him. Miss Fanny Twinkler couldn't bear the sight of him, and we used to make Fagg think that she had taken a fancy to him, and sent him little delicacies and books from the cabin. You ought to have witnessed the rich scene that took place when he came up, stammering and very sick, to thank her! Didn't she flash up grandly and beautifully and scornfully? So like "Medora," Rattler said—Rattler knew Byron by heart—and wasn't old Fagg awfully cut up? But he got over it, and when Rattler fell sick at Valparaiso, old Fagg used to nurse him. You see he was a good sort of fellow, but he lacked manliness and spirit.

He had absolutely no idea of poetry. I've seen him sit stolidly by, mending his old clothes, when Rattler delivered that stirring apostrophe of Byron's to the ocean. He asked Rattler once, quite seriously, if he thought Byron was ever sea-sick. I don't remember Rattler's reply, but I know we all laughed very much, and I have no doubt it was something good, for Rattler was smart.

When the "Skyscraper" arrived at San Francisco we had a grand "feed." We agreed to meet every year and perpetuate the occasion. Of course we didn't invite Fagg. Fagg was a steerage-passenger, and it was necessary, you see, now we were ashore, to exercise a little discretion. But Old Fagg, as we

called him—he was only about twenty-five years old, by the way—was the source of immense amusement to us that day. It appeared that he had conceived the idea that he could walk to Sacramento, and actually started off afoot. We had a good time, and shook hands with one another all around, and so parted. Ah me! only a few years ago, and yet some of those hands then clasped in amity have been clenched at each other, or have dipped furtively in one another's pockets. I know that we didn't dine together the next year, because young Barker swore he wouldn't put his feet under the same mahogany with such a very contemptible scoundrel as that Mixer; and Nibbles, who borrowed money at Valparaiso of young Stubbs, who was then a waiter in a restaurant, didn't like to meet such people.

When I bought a number of shares in the Coyote Tunnel at Mugginsville, in '54, I thought I'd take a run up there and see it. I stopped at the Empire Hotel, and after dinner I got a horse and rode round the town and out to the claim. One of those individuals whom newspaper correspondents call "our intelligent informant," and to whom in all small communities the right of answering questions is tacitly yielded, was quietly pointed out to me. Habit had enabled him to work and talk at the same time, and he never pretermitted either.

He gave me a history of the claim, and added: "You see, stranger" (he addressed the bank before him), "gold is sure to come out 'er that theer claim (he put in a comma with his pick), but the old propri-e-tor (he wriggled out the word and the point of his pick) warn't of much account (a long stroke of the pick for a period). He was green, and let the boys about here jump him,"—and the rest of his sentence was confided to his hat, which he had removed to wipe his manly brow with his red bandanna.

I asked him who was the original proprietor.

"His name war Fagg."

I went to see him. He looked a little older and plainer. He had worked hard, he said, and was getting on "so, so." I took quite a liking to him and patronised him to some extent. Whether I did so because I was beginning to have a distrust for such fellows as Rattler and Mixer is not necessary for me to state.

You remember how the Coyote Tunnel went in, and how awfully we shareholders were done! Well, the next thing I heard was that Rattler, who was one of the heaviest shareholders, was up at Mugginsville keeping bar for the proprietor of the Mugginsville Hotel, and that old Fagg had struck it rich, and didn't know what to do with his money. All this was told me by Mixer, who had been there

settling up matters, and likewise that Fagg was sweet upon the daughter of the proprietor of the aforesaid hotel. And so by hearsay and letter I eventually gathered that old Robins, the hotel man, was trying to get up a match between Nellie Robins and Fagg. Nellie was a pretty, plump and foolish little thing, and would do just as her father wished. I thought it would be a good thing for Fagg if he should marry and settle down; that as a married man he might be of some account. So I ran up to Mugginsville one day to look after things.

It did me an immense deal of good to make Rattler mix my drinks for me—Rattler! the gay, brilliant, and unconquerable Rattler, who had tried to snub me two years ago. I talked to him about old Fagg and Nellie, particularly as I thought the subject was distasteful. He never liked Fagg, and he was sure, he said, that Nellie didn't. Did Nellie like anybody else? He turned around to the mirror behind the bar and brushed up his hair! I understood the conceited wretch. I thought I'd put Fagg on his guard and get him to hurry up matters. I had a long talk with him. You could see by the way the poor fellow acted that he was badly stuck. He sighed, and promised to pluck up courage to hurry matters to a crisis. Nellie was a good girl, and I think had a sort of quiet respect for old Fagg's unobtrusiveness. But her fancy was



already taken captive by Rattler's superficial qualities, which were obvious and pleasing. I don't think Nellie was any worse than you or I. We are more apt to take acquaintances at their apparent value than their intrinsic worth. It's less trouble, and, except when we want to trust them, quite as convenient. The difficulty with women is that their feelings are apt to get interested sooner than ours, and then, you know, reasoning is out of the question. This is what old Fagg would have known had he been of any account. But he wasn't. So much the worse for him.

It was a few months afterwards, and I was sitting in my office when I walked old Fagg, I was surprised to see him down, but we talked over the current topics in that mechanical manner of people who know that they have something else to say, but are obliged to get at it in that formal way. After an interval Fagg in his natural manner said:—

“I'm going home!”

“Going home?”

“Yes—that is, I think I'll take a trip to the Atlantic States. I came to see you, as you know I have some little property, and I have executed a power of attorney for you to manage my affairs. I have some papers I'd like to leave with you. Will you take charge of them?”

“Yes,” I said. “But what of Nellie?”

His face fell. He tried to smile, and the combination resulted in one of the most startling and grotesque effects I ever beheld. At length he said:—

“I shall not marry Nellie—that is”—he seemed to apologise internally for the positive form of expression—“I think that I had better not.”

“David Fagg,” I said with sudden severity, “you’re of no account !”

To my astonishment his face brightened. “Yes,” said he, “that’s it !—I’m of no account ! But I always knew it. You see I thought Rattler loved that girl as well as I did, and I knew she liked him better than she did me, and would be happier I dare say with him. But then I knew that old Robins would have preferred me to him, as I was better off—and the girl would do as he said—and, you see, I thought I was kinder in the way—and so I left. But,” he continued, as I was about to interrupt him, “for fear the old man might object to Rattler, I’ve lent him enough to set him up in business for himself in Dogtown. A pushing, active, brilliant fellow, you know, like Rattler can get along, and will soon be in his old position again—and you needn’t be hard on him you know, if he doesn’t. Good bye.”

I was too much disgusted with his treatment of that Rattler to be at all amiable, but as his business

was profitable, I promised to attend to it, and he left. A few weeks passed. The return steamer arrived, and a terrible incident occupied the papers for days afterwards. People in all parts of the State conned eagerly the details of an awful shipwreck, and those who had friends aboard went away by themselves, and read the long list of the lost under their breath. I read of the gifted, the gallant, the noble, and loved ones who had perished, and among them I think I was the first to read the name of David Fagg. For the "man of no account" had "gone home!"





## THE MISSION DOLORES.

**T**HE Mission Dolores is destined to be "The last Sigh" of the native Californian. When the last "Greaser" shall indolently give way to the bustling Yankee, I can imagine he will, like the Moorish King, ascend one of the Mission hills to take his last lingering look at the hilled city. For a long time he will cling tenaciously to Pacific Street. He will delve in the rocky fastnesses of Telegraph Hill until progress shall remove it. He will haunt Vallejo Street, and those back slums which so vividly typify the degradation of a people; but he will eventually make way for improvement. The Mission will be the last to drop from his nerveless fingers.

As I stand here this pleasant afternoon, looking up at the old chapel,—its ragged senility contrasting with the smart spring sunshine, its two gouty pillars with the plaster dropping away like tattered bandages, its rayless windows, its crumbling entrances,

the leper spots on its whitewashed wall eating through the dark adobe—I give the poor old mendicant but a few years longer to sit by the highway and ask alms in the names of the blessed saints. Already the vicinity is haunted with the shadow of its dissolution. The shriek of the locomotive discords with the Angelus bell. An Episcopal church, of a green Gothic type, with massive buttresses of Oregon pine, even now mocks its hoary age with imitation and supplants it with a sham. Vain, alas! were those rural accessories, the nurseries and market-gardens, that once gathered about its walls and resisted civic encroachment. They, too, are passing away. Even those queer little adobe buildings with tiled roofs like longitudinal slips of cinnamon, and walled enclosures sacredly guarding a few bullock horns and strips of hide. I look in vain for the half reclaimed Mexican, whose respectability stopped at his waist, and whose red sash under his vest was the utter undoing of his black broadcloth. I miss, too, those black-haired women, with swaying unstable busts, whose dresses were always unseasonable in texture and pattern; whose wearing of a shawl was a terrible awakening from the poetic dream of the Spanish mantilla. Traces of another nationality are visible. The railroad “navvy” has builded his shanty near the chapel, and smokes his pipe in the Posada. Gutturals have

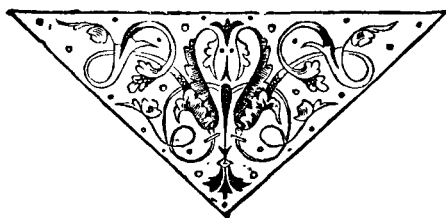
taken the place of linguals and sibilants; I miss the half-chanted, half-drawled cadences that used to mingle with the cherry "All abroad" of the stage-driver in those good old days when the stages ran hourly to the Mission, and a trip thither was an excursion. At the very gates of the temple, in the place of those "who sell doves for sacrifice," a vender of mechanical spiders has halted with his unhallowed wares. Even the old Padre—last type of the Missionary, and descendant of the good Junipero—I cannot find to-day; in his stead a light-haired Celt is reading a lesson from a Vulgate that is wonderfully replete with double r's. Gentle priest, in thy R-isons, let the stranger and heretic be remembered.

I open a little gate and enter the Mission Church-yard. There is no change here, though perhaps the graves lie closer together. A willow-tree, growing beside the deep, brown wall, has burst into tufted plumes in the fulness of spring. The tall grass-blades over each mound show a strange quickening of the soil below. It is pleasanter here than on the bleak mountain, seaward, where distracting winds continually bring the strife and turmoil of the ocean. The Mission Hills lovingly embrace the little cemetery, whose decorative taste is less ostentatious. The foreign flavour is strong; here are never-failing garlands of *immortelles*, with their sepulchral

spicery; here are little cheap medallions of pewter, with the adornment of three black tears, that would look like the three of clubs, but that the simple humility of the inscription counterbalances all sense of the ridiculous. Here are children's graves with guardian angels of great specific gravity; but here, too, are the little one's toys in a glass case beside them. Here is the average quantity of execrable original verses; but one stanza—over a sailor's grave—is striking, for it expresses a hope of salvation through the “Lord High Admiral above!” Over the foreign graves there is a notable lack of scriptural quotation, and an increase if I may say it, of humanity and tenderness. I cannot help thinking that too many of my countrymen are influenced by a morbid desire to make a practical point of this occasion, and are too apt hastily to crowd a whole life of omission into the culminating act. But when I see the gray *immortelles* crowning a tombstone, I know I shall find the mysteries of the resurrection shown rather in symbols, and only the love taught in His new commandment left for the graphic touch. But “they manage these things better in France.”

During my purposeless ramble the sun has been steadily climbing the brown wall of the church, and the air seems to grow cold and raw. The bright green dies out of the grass, and the rich

bronze comes down from the wall. The willow-tree seems half inclined to doff its plumes, and wears the dejected air of a broken faith and violated trust. The spice of the *immortelles* mixes with the incense that steals through the open window. Within, the barbaric gilt and crimson look cold and cheap in this searching air ; by this light the church certainly is old and ugly. I cannot help wondering whether the old Fathers, if they ever revisit the scene of their former labours, in their larger comprehensions, view with regret the impending change, or mourn over the day when the Mission Dolores shall appropriately come to grief.







## JOHN CHINAMAN.



HE expression of the Chinese face in the aggregate is neither cheerful nor happy. In an acquaintance of half-a-dozen years, I can only recall one or two exceptions to this rule. There is an abiding consciousness of degradation—a secret pain or self-humiliation visible in the lines of the mouth and eye. Whether it is only a modification of Turkish gravity, or whether it is the dread Valley of the Shadow of the Drug through which they are continually straying, I cannot say. They seldom smile, and their laughter is of such an extraordinary and sardonic nature—so purely a mechanical spasm, quite independent of any mirthful attribute—that to this day I am doubtful whether I ever saw a Chinaman laugh. A theatrical representation by natives, one might think, would have set my mind at ease on this point; but it did not. Indeed a new difficulty presented itself—the impossibility of determining whether the performance was

a tragedy or farce. I thought I detected the low comedian in an active youth who turned two somersaults, and knocked everybody down on entering the stage. But, unfortunately, even this classic resemblance to the legitimate farce of our civilisation was deceptive. Another brocaded actor, who represented the hero of the play, turned three somersaults, and not only upset my theory and his fellow actors at the same time, but apparently run a-muck behind the scenes for some time afterwards. I looked around at the glinting white teeth to observe the effect of these two palpable hits. They were received with equal acclamation, and apparently equal facial spasms. One or two beheadings which enlivened the play produced the same sardonic effect, and left upon my mind a painful anxiety to know what was the serious business of life in China. It was noticeable, however, that my unrestrained laughter had a discordant effect, and that triangular eyes sometimes turned ominously towards the "Fanqui devil;" but as I retired discreetly before the play was finished, there were no serious results. I have only given the above as an instance of the impossibility of deciding upon the outward and superficial expression of Chinese mirth. Of its inner and deeper existence I have some private doubts. An audience that will view with a serious aspect the hero, after a frightful and

agonizing death, get up and quietly walk off the stage, cannot be said to have remarkable perceptions of the ludicrous.

I have often been struck with the delicate pliability of the Chinese expression and taste, that might suggest a broader and deeper criticism than is becoming these pages. A Chinaman will adopt the American costume, and wear it with a taste of colour and detail that will surpass those "native, and to the manner born." To look at a Chinese slipper, one might imagine it impossible to shape the original foot to anything less cumbrous and roomy, yet a neater-fitting boot than that belonging to the Americanised Chinaman is rarely seen on this side of the Continent. When the loose sack or paletot takes the place of his brocade blouse, it is worn with a refinement and grace that might bring a jealous pang to the exquisite of our more refined civilisation. Pantaloon fall easily and naturally over legs that have known unlimited freedom and bagginess, and even garrote collars meet correctly around sun-tanned throats. The new expression seldom overflows in gaudy cravats. I will back my Americanised Chinaman against any neophyte of European birth in the choice of that article. While in our own State, the "Greaser" resists one by one the garments of the Northern invader, and even wears the livery of his conqueror

with a wild and buttonless freedom, the Chinaman, abused and degraded as he is, changes by correctly graded transition to the garments of Christian civilisation. There is but one article of European wear that he avoids. These Bohemian eyes have never yet been pained by the spectacle of a tall hat on the head of an intelligent Chinaman.

My acquaintance with John has been made up of weekly interviews, involving the adjustment of the washing accounts, so that I have not been able to study his character from a social view-point or observe him in the privacy of the domestic circle. I have gathered enough to justify me in believing him to be generally honest, faithful, simple and painstaking. Of his simplicity let me record an instance where a sad and civil young Chinaman brought me certain shirts with most of the buttons missing and others hanging on delusively by a single thread. In a moment of unguarded irony I informed him that unity would at least have been preserved if the buttons were removed altogether. He smiled sadly and went away. I thought I had hurt his feelings, until the next week when he brought me my shirts with a look of intelligence, with the buttons carefully and totally erased. At another time, to guard against his general disposition to carry off anything as soiled clothes that he thought could hold water, I requested him to always wait

until he saw me. Coming home late one evening, I found the household in great consternation, over an immovable Celestial who had remained seated on the front door-step during the day, sad and submissive, firm but also patient, and only betraying any animation or token of his mission when he saw me coming. This same Chinaman evinced some evidences of regard for a little girl in the family, who in her turn reposed such faith in his intellectual qualities as to present him with a preternaturally uninteresting Sunday-school book, her own property. This book John made a point of carrying ostentatiously with him in his weekly visits. It appeared usually on the top of the clean clothes, and was sometimes painfully clasped outside of the big bundle of solid linen. Whether John believed he unconsciously imbibed some spiritual life through its pasteboard cover, as the Prince in the Arabian Nights imbibed the medicine through the handle of the mallet, or whether he wished to exhibit a due sense of gratitude, or whether he hadn't any pockets, I have never been able to ascertain. In his turn he would sometimes cut marvellous imitation roses from carrots for his little friend. I am inclined to think that the few roses strewn in John's path were such scentless imitations. The thorns only were real. From the persecutions of the young and old of a certain class,

his life was a torment. I don't know what was the exact philosophy that Confucius taught, but it is to be hoped that poor John in his persecution is still able to detect the conscious hate and fear with which inferiority always regards the possibility of even-handed justice, and which is the key-note to the vulgar clamour about servile and degraded races.





## A VENERABLE IMPOSTOR.



AS I glance across my table, I am somewhat distracted by the spectacle of a venerable head whose crown occasionally appears beyond, at about its level. The apparition of a very small hand—whose fingers are bunchy and have the appearance of being slightly webbed—which is frequently lifted above the table in a vain and impotent attempt to reach the inkstand, always affects me as a novelty at each recurrence of the phenomenon. Yet both the venerable head and bunchy fingers belong to an individual with whom I am familiar, and to whom, for certain reasons hereafter described, I choose to apply the epithet written above this article.

His advent in the family was attended with peculiar circumstances. He was received with some concern—the number of retainers having been increased by one in honour of his arrival. He appeared to be weary—his pretence was that he had

come from a long journey—so that for days, weeks, and even months, he did not leave his bed except when he was carried. But it was remarkable that his appetite was invariably regular and healthy, and that his meals, which he required should be brought to him, were seldom rejected. During this time he had little conversation with the family, his knowledge of our vernacular being limited, but occasionally spoke to himself in his own language—a foreign tongue. The difficulties attending this eccentricity were obviated by the young woman who had from the first taken him under her protection,—being, like the rest of her sex, peculiarly open to impositions—and who at once disorganized her own tongue to suit his. This was effected by the contraction of the syllables of some words, the addition of syllables to others, and an ingenious disregard for tenses and the governing powers of the verb. The same singular law which impels people in conversation with foreigners to imitate their broken English governed the family in their communications with him. He received these evidences of his power with an indifference not wholly free from scorn. The expression of his eye would occasionally denote that his higher nature revolted from them. I have no doubt myself that his wants were frequently misinterpreted; that the stretching forth of his hands towards the moon and stars might have



been the performance of some religious rite peculiar to his own country, which was in ours misconstrued into a desire for physical nourishment. His repetition of the word "goo-goo"—which was subject to a variety of opposite interpretations—when taken in conjunction with his size, in my mind seemed to indicate his aboriginal or Aztec origin.

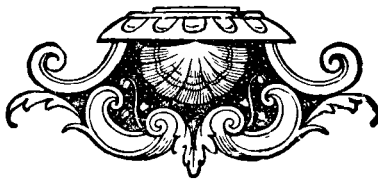
I incline to this belief, as it sustains the impression I have already hinted at, that his extreme youth is a simulation and deceit; that he is really older and has lived before at some remote period, and that his conduct fully justifies his title as A Venerable Impostor. A variety of circumstances corroborate this impression; his tottering walk, which is a senile as well as a juvenile condition; his venerable head, thatched with such imperceptible hair that, at a distance, its looks like a mild aureole, and his imperfect dental exhibition. But besides these physical peculiarities may be observed certain moral symptoms, which go to disprove his assumed youth. He is in the habit of falling into reveries, caused, I have no doubt, by some circumstance which suggests a comparison with his experience in his remoter boyhood, or by some serious retrospection of the past years. He has been detected lying awake, at times when he should have been asleep, engaged in curiously comparing the bed-clothes, walls, and furniture with some recollection

of his youth. At such moments he has been heard to sing softly to himself fragments of some unintelligible composition, which probably still linger in his memory as the echoes of a music he has long outgrown. He has the habit of receiving strangers with the familiarity of one who had met them before, and to whom their antecedents and peculiarities were matters of old acquaintance, and so unerring is his judgment of their previous character that when he withholds his confidence I am apt to withhold mine. It is somewhat remarkable that while the maturity of his years and the respect due to them is denied by man, his superiority and venerable age is never questioned by the brute creation. The dog treats him with a respect and consideration accorded to none others, and the cat permits a familiarity which I should shudder to attempt. It may be considered an evidence of some Pantheistic quality of his previous education, that he seems to recognise a fellowship even in inarticulate objects: he has been known to verbally address plants, flowers, and fruit, and to extend his confidence to such inanimate objects as chairs and tables. There can be little doubt that, in the remote period of his youth, these objects were endowed with not only sentient natures, but moral capabilities, and he is still in the habit of beating them when they collide with him, and of pardoning them with a kiss.

As he has grown older—rather let me say, as we have approximated to his years—he has, in spite of the apparent paradox, lost much of his senile gravity. It must be confessed that some of his actions of late appear to our imperfect comprehension inconsistent with his extreme age. A habit of marching up and down with a string tied to a soda-water bottle, a disposition to ride anything that could by any exercise of the liveliest fancy be made to assume equine proportions, a propensity to blacken his venerable white hair with ink and coal dust, and an omnivorous appetite which did not stop at chalk, clay, or cinders, were peculiarities not calculated to excite respect. In fact, he would seem to have become demoralised, and when, after a prolonged absence the other day, he was finally discovered standing upon the front steps addressing a group of delighted children out of his limited vocabulary, the circumstance could only be accounted for as the garrulity of age.

But I lay aside my pen amidst an ominous silence and the disappearance of the venerable head from my plane of vision. As I step to the other side of the table, I find that sleep has overtaken him in an overt act of hoary wickedness. The very pages I have devoted to an exposition of his deceit he has quietly abstracted, and I find them covered with cabalistic figures and wild-looking hieroglyphs

traced with his forefinger dipped in ink, which doubtless in his own language conveys a scathing commentary on my composition. But he sleeps peacefully, and there is something in his face which tells me that he has already wandered away to that dim region of his youth where I cannot follow him. And as there comes a strange stirring at my heart when I contemplate the immeasurable gulf which lies between us, and how slight and feeble as yet is his grasp on this world and its strange realities, I find, too late, that I also am a willing victim of the "VENERABLE IMPOSTOR."





## FIVE O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING.

NOTES BY AN EARLY RISER.



HAVE always been an early riser. The popular legend that "Early to bed and early to rise," invariably and rythmically resulted in healthiness, opulence and wisdom, I beg here to solemnly protest against. As an "unhealthy" man, as an "unwealthy" man, and doubtless by virtue of this protest an "unwise" man, I am, I think, a glaring example of the untruth of the proposition.

For instance, it is my misfortune, as an early riser, to live upon a certain fashionable avenue, where the practice of early rising is confined exclusively to domestics. Consequently, when I issue forth on this broad, beautiful thoroughfare at six a.m., I cannot help thinking that I am, to a certain extent, desecrating its traditional customs.

I have more than once detected the milkman

winking at the maid with a diabolical suggestion that I was returning from a carouse, and Roundsman 9999 has once or twice followed me a block or two with the evident impression that I was a burglar returning from a successful evening out. Nevertheless, these various indiscretions have brought me into contact with a kind of character and phenomena whose existence I might otherwise have doubted.

First, let me speak of a large class of working-people whose presence is, I think, unknown to many of those gentlemen who are in the habit of legislating or writing about them. A majority of these early risers in the neighbourhood of what I may call my "beat" carry with them unmistakable evidences of the American type. I have seen so little of that foreign element that is popularly supposed to be the real working class of the great metropolis, that I have often been inclined to doubt statistics. The ground that my morning rambles cover extends from Twenty-third Street to Washington Park, and lately from Sixth Avenue to Broadway. The early rising artisans that I meet here, crossing three avenues,—the milkmen, the truck-drivers, the workman, even the occasional tramp—wherever they may come from or go to, or what their real *habitat* may be—are invariably Americans. I give it as an honest record, whatever

its significance or insignificance may be, that during the last year, between the hours of six and eight a.m., in and about the locality I have mentioned, I have met with but two unmistakable foreigners, an Irishman and a German. Perhaps it may be necessary to add to this statement that the people I have met at those early hours I have never seen at any other time in the same locality.

As to their quality, the artisans were always cleanly dressed, intelligent, and respectful. I remember, however, one morning, when the ice storm of the preceding night had made the sidewalks glistening, smiling and impassable, to have journeyed down the middle of Twelfth Street with a mechanic so sooty as to absolutely leave a legible track in the snowy pathway. He was the fireman attending the engine in a noted manufactory, and in our brief conversation he told me many facts regarding his profession which I fear interested me more than the after-dinner speeches of some distinguished gentlemen I had heard the preceding night. I remember that he spoke of his engine as "she," and related certain circumstances regarding her inconsistency, her aberrations, her pettishnesses, that seemed to justify the feminine gender. I have a grateful recollection of him as being one who introduced me to a restaurant where chicory, thinly disguised as coffee, was served with

bread at 5 cents a cup, and that he honourably insisted on being the host, and paid his ten cents for our mutual entertainment with the grace of a Barmecide. I remember, in a more genial season—I think early summer—to have found upon the benches of Washington Park a gentleman who informed me that his profession was that of a “pigeon-catcher;” that he contracted with certain parties in this city to furnish these birds for what he called their “pigeon-shoots;” and that in fulfilling this contract he often was obliged to go as far west as Minnesota. The details he gave—his methods of entrapping the birds, his study of their habits, his evident belief that the city pigeon, however well provided for by parties who fondly believed the bird to be their own, was really *feræ naturæ*, and consequently “game” for the pigeon-catcher—were all so interesting that I listened to him with undisguised delight. When he had finished, however, he said, “And now, sir, being a poor man, with a large family, and work bein’ rather slack this year, if ye could oblige me with the loan of a dollar and your address, until remittances what I’m expecting come in from Chicago, you’ll be doin’ me a great service, &c., &c.” He got the dollar, of course (his information was worth the money, but I imagine he lost my address). Yet it is only fair to say that some days after, relating his



experience to a prominent sporting man, he corroborated all its details, and satisfied me that my pigeon-catching friend, although unfortunate, was not an impostor.

And this leads me to speak of the birds. Of all early risers, my most importunate, aggressive, and obtrusive companions are the English sparrows. Between six and seven a.m. they seem to possess the avenue, and resent my intrusion. I remember, one chilly morning, when I came upon a flurry of them, chattering, quarrelling, skimming, and alighting just before me. I stopped at last, fearful of stepping on the nearest. To my great surprise, instead of flying away, he contested the ground inch by inch before my advancing foot, with his wings outspread and open bill outstretched, very much like that ridiculous burlesque of the American eagle which the common canary-bird assumes when teased. "Did you ever see 'em wash in the fountain in the square?" said Roundsman 9999, early one summer morning. I had not. "I guess they're there yet. Come and see 'em," he said, and complacently accompanied me two blocks. I don't know which was the finer sight—the thirty or forty winged sprites, dashing in and out of the basin, each the very impersonation of a light-hearted, mischievous Puck, or this grave policeman, with badge and club and shield, looking on with delight. Perhaps my

visible amusement, or the spectacle of a brother policeman just then going past with a couple of "drunk and disorderlies," recalled his official responsibilities and duties. "They say them foreign sparrows drive all the other birds away," he added, severely; and then walked off with a certain reserved manner, as if it were not impossible for him to be called upon some morning to take the entire feathered assembly into custody, and if so called upon he should do it.

Next, I think, in procession among the early risers, and surely next in fresh and innocent exterior, were the work-women or shop-girls. I have seen this fine avenue on gala afternoons bright with the beauty and elegance of an opulent city, but I have seen no more beautiful faces than I have seen among these humbler sisters. As the mere habits of dress in America, except to a very acute critic, give no suggestion of the rank of the wearer, I can imagine an inexperienced foreigner utterly mystified and confounded by these girls, who perhaps work a sewing-machine or walk the long floors of a fashionable dry-goods shop. I remember one face and figure, faultless and complete—modestly, yet most becomingly dressed—indeed, a figure that Compté-Calix might have taken for one of his exquisite studies, which, between seven and eight a.m., passed through Eleventh Street, between

Sixth Avenue and Broadway. So exceptionally fine was her carriage, so chaste and virginal her presence, and so refined and even spiritual her features, that, as a literary man, I would have been justified in taking her for the heroine of a society novel. Indeed, I had already woven a little romance about her, when one morning she overtook me, accompanied by another girl—pretty, but of a different type—with whom she was earnestly conversing. As the two passed me, there fell from her faultless lips the following astounding sentence: "And I told him, if he didn't like it he might lump it, and he travelled off on his left ear, you bet!" Heaven knows what indiscretion this speech saved me from; but the reader will understand what a sting the pain of rejection might have added to it by the above formula.

The "morning-cocktail" men come next in my experience of early rising. I used to take my early cup of coffee in the café of a certain fashionable restaurant that had a bar attached. I could not help noticing that, unlike the usual social libations of my countrymen, the act of taking a morning cocktail was a solitary one. In the course of my experience I cannot recall the fact of two men taking an ante-breakfast cocktail together. On the contrary, I have observed the male animal rush savagely at the bar, demand his drink of the

bar-keeper, swallow it, and hasten from the scene of his early debauchery, or else take it in a languid, perfunctory manner, which, I think, must have been insulting to the bar-keeper. I have observed two men, whom I had seen drinking amicably together the preceding night, standing gloomily at the opposite corners of the bar, evidently trying not to see each other and making the matter a confidential one with the bar-keeper. I have seen even a thin disguise of simplicity assumed. I remember an elderly gentleman, of most respectable exterior, who used to enter the café as if he had strayed there accidentally. After looking around carefully, and yet unostentatiously, he would walk to the bar, and, with an air of affected carelessness, state that "not feeling well this morning, he guessed he would take—well, he would leave it to the bar-keeper." The bar-keeper invariably gave him a stiff brandy cocktail. When the old gentleman had done this half a dozen times, I think I lost faith in him. I tried afterwards to glean from the bar-keeper some facts regarding those experiences, but I am proud to say that he was honourably reticent. Indeed, I think it may be said truthfully that there is no record of a bar-keeper who has been "interviewed." Clergymen and doctors have, but it is well for the weakness of humanity that the line should be drawn somewhere.

And this reminds me that one distressing phase of early rising is the incongruous and unpleasant contact of the preceding night. The social yesterday is not fairly over before nine a.m. to-day, and there is always a humorous, sometimes a pathetic lapping over the edges. I remember one morning at six o'clock to have been overtaken by a carriage that drew up beside me. I recognised the coachman, who touched his hat apologetically, as if he wished me to understand that he was not at all responsible for the condition of his master, and I went to the door of the carriage. I was astonished to find two young friends of mine, in correct evening dress, reclining on each other's shoulders and sleeping the sleep of the justly inebriated. I stated this fact to the coachman. Not a muscle of his well-trained face answered to my smile. But he said: "You see, sir, we've been out all night, and more than four blocks below they saw you, and wanted me to hail you, but you know you stopped to speak to a gentleman, and so I sorter lingered, and I drove round the block once or twice, and I guess I've got 'em quiet again." I looked in the carriage door once more on these sons of Belial. They were sleeping quite unconsciously. A *bouttonniere* in the lapel of the younger one's coat had shed its leaves, which were scattered over him with a ridiculous suggestion of the "Babes in the Wood," and I closed the

carriage door softly. "I suppose I'd better take 'em home, sir?" queried the coachman, gravely, "Well, yes, John, perhaps you had."

There is another picture in my early rising experience that I wish was as simply and honestly ludicrous. It was at a time when the moral sentiment of the metropolis, expressed through ordinance and special legislation, had declared itself against a certain form of "variety" entertainment, and had as usual, proceeded against the performers, and not the people who encouraged them. I remember, one frosty morning, to have encountered in Washington Park my honest friend Sergeant X. and Roundsman 9999 conveying a party of these derelicts to the station. One of the women, evidently, had not had time to change her apparel, and had thinly disguised the flowing robe and loose *cestus* of Venus under a ragged "waterproof;" while the other, who had doubtless *posed* for Mercury, hid her shapely tights in a plaid shawl, and changed her winged sandals for a pair of "arctics." Their rouged faces were streaked and stained with tears. The man who was with them, the male of their species, had but hastily washed himself of his Ethiopian presentment, and was still black behind the ears; while an exaggerated shirt collar and frilled shirt made his occasional indignant profanity irresistibly ludicrous. So they fared on over the glit-

tering snow, against the rosy sunlight of the square, the gray front of the University building, with a few twittering sparrows in the foreground, beside the two policemen, quiet and impassive as fate. I could not help thinking of the distinguished A., the most fashionable B., the wealthy and respectable C., the sentimental D., and the man of the world E., who were present at the performance, whose distinguished patronage had called it into life, and who were then resting quietly in their beds, while these haggard servants of their pleasure were haled over the snow to punishment and ignominy.

Let me finish by recalling one brighter picture of that same season. It was early; so early that the cross of Grace Church had, when I looked up, just caught the morning sun, and for a moment flamed like a crusader's symbol. And then the grace and glory of that exquisite spire became slowly visible. Fret by fret the sunlight stole slowly down, quivering and dropping from each, until at last the whole church beamed in rosy radiance. Up and down the long avenue the street lay in shadow; by some strange trick of the atmosphere the sun seemed to have sought out only that graceful structure for its blessing. And then there was a dull rumble. It was the first omnibus—the first throb in the great artery of the reviving city. I looked up. The church was again in shadow.



## A LONELY RIDE.

**A**S I stepped into the Slumgullion stage I saw that it was a dark night, a lonely road, and that I was the only passenger. Let me assure the reader that I have no ulterior design in making this assertion. A long course of light reading has forewarned me what every experienced intelligence must confidently look for from such a statement. The story-teller who wilfully tempts Fate by such obvious beginnings; who is to the expectant reader in danger of being robbed or half murdered, or frightened by an escaped lunatic, or introduced to his lady-love for the first time, deserves to be detected. I am relieved to say that none of these things occurred to me. The road from Wingdam to Slumgullion knew no other banditti than the regularly licensed hotel-keepers; lunatics had not yet reached such depth of imbecility as to ride of their own free will in California stages; and my Laura, amiable and long suffering as she always is, could not, I fear, have borne up against



these depressing circumstances long enough to have made the slightest impression on me.

I stood with my shawl and carpet-bag in hand, gazing doubtfully on the vehicle. Even in the darkness the red dust of Wingdam was visible on its roof and sides, and the red slime of Slumgullion clung tenaciously to its wheels. I opened the door; the stage creaked uneasily, and in the gloomy abyss the swaying straps beckoned me, like ghostly hands, to come in now, and have my sufferings out at once.

I must not omit to mention the occurrence of a circumstance which struck me as appalling and mysterious. A lounge on the steps of the hotel, whom I had reason to suppose was not in any way connected with the stage company, gravely descended, and, walking toward the conveyance, tried the handle of the door, opened it, expectorated in the carriage, and returned to the hotel with a serious demeanour. Hardly had he resumed his position, when another individual, equally disinterested, impassively walked down the steps, proceeded to the back of the stage, lifted it, expectorated carefully on the axle, and returned slowly and pensively to the hotel. A third spectator wearily disengaged himself from one of the Ionic columns of the portico and walked to the box, remained for a moment in serious and expectorative contem-

plation of the boot, and then returned to his column. There was something so weird in this baptism that I grew quite nervous.

Perhaps I was out of spirits. A number of infinitesimal annoyances, winding up with the resolute persistency of the clerk at the stage-office to enter my name misspelt on the way-bill, had not predisposed me to cheerfulness. The inmates of the Eureka House, from a social view-point, were not attractive. There was the prevailing opinion — so common to many honest people — that a serious style of deportment and conduct towards a stranger indicates high gentility and elevated station. Obeying this principle, all hilarity ceased on my entrance to supper, and general remark merged into the safer and uncompromising chronicle of several bad cases of diphtheria, then epidemic at Wingdam. When I left the dining-room, with an odd feeling that I had been supping exclusively on mustard and tea leaves, I stopped a moment at the parlour door. A piano, harmoniously related to the dinner-bell, tinkled responsive to a diffident and uncertain touch. On the white wall the shadow of an old and sharp profile was bending over several symmetrical and shadowy curls. "I sez to Mariar, Mariar, sez I, 'Praise to the face is open disgrace.'" I heard no more. Dreading some susceptibility to sincere expression on the subject of female loveli-

ness, I walked away, checking the compliment that otherwise might have risen unbidden to my lips, and have brought shame and sorrow to the household.

It was with the memory of these experiences resting heavily upon me, that I stood hesitatingly before the stage door. The driver, about to mount, was for a moment illuminated by the open door of the hotel. He had the wearied look which was the distinguishing expression of Wingdam. Satisfied that I was properly way-billed and receipted for, he took no further notice of me. I looked longingly at the box-seat, but he did not respond to the appeal. I flung my carpet-bag into the chasm, dived recklessly after it, and—before I was fairly seated—with a great sigh, a creaking of unwilling springs, complaining bolts, and harshly expostulating axle, we moved away. Rather the hotel door slipped behind, the sound of the piano sank to rest, and the night and its shadows moved solemnly upon us.

To say it was dark expressed but faintly the pitchy obscurity that encompassed the vehicle. The roadside trees were scarcely distinguishable as deeper masses of shadow; I knew them only by the peculiar sodden odour that from time to time sluggishly flowed in at the open window as we rolled by. We proceeded slowly; so leisurely that, lean-

ing from the carriage, I more than once detected the fragrant sigh of some astonished cow, whose ruminating repose upon the highway we had ruthlessly disturbed. But in the darkness our progress, more the guidance of some mysterious instinct than any apparent volition of our own, gave an indefinable charm of security to our journey, that a moment's hesitation or indecision on the part of the driver would have destroyed.

I had indulged a hope that in the empty vehicle I might obtain that rest so often denied me in its crowded condition. It was a weak delusion. When I stretched out my limbs it was only to find that the ordinary conveniences for making several people distinctly uncomfortable were distributed throughout my individual frame. At last, resting my arms on the straps, by dint of much gymnastic effort I became sufficiently composed to be aware of a more refined species of torture. The springs of the stage, rising and falling regularly, produced a rythmical beat, which began to painfully absorb my attention. Slowly this thumping merged into a senseless echo of the mysterious female of the hotel parlour, and shaped itself into this awful and benumbing axiom—"Praise-to-the-face-is-open-disgrace. Praise-to-the-face-is-open-disgrace." Inequalities of the road only quickened its utterance or drawled it to an exasperating length.

It was of no use to seriously consider the statement. It was of no use to except to it indignantly. It was of no use to recall the many instances where praise to the face had redounded to the everlasting honour of praiser and bepraised; of no use to dwell sentimentally on modest genius and courage lifted up and strengthened by open commendation; of no use to except to the mysterious female—to picture her as rearing a thin-blooded generation on selfish and mechanically repeated axioms—all this failed to counteract the momentous repetition of this sentence. There was nothing to do but to give in—and I was about to accept it weakly, as we too often treat other illusions of darkness and necessity, for the time being—when I became aware of some other annoyance that had been forcing itself upon me for the last few moments. How quiet the driver was.

Was there any driver? Had I any reason to suppose that he was not lying, gagged and bound on the roadside, and the highwayman, with blackened face who did the thing so quietly, driving me—whither? The thing is perfectly feasible. And what is this fancy now being jolted out of me. A story? It's of no use to keep it back—particularly in this abysmal vehicle, and here it comes: I am a Marquis—a French Marquis; French, because the peerage is not so well known, and the country is

better adapted to romantic incident—a Marquis, because the democratic reader delights in the nobility. My name is something *ligny*. I am coming from Paris to my country-seat at St. Germain. It is a dark night, and I fall asleep and tell my honest coachman, André, not to disturb me, and dream of an angel. The carriage at last stops at the château. It is so dark that when I alight I do not recognise the face of the footman who holds the carriage door. But what of that? —*peste!* I am heavy with sleep. The same obscurity also hides the old familiar indecencies of the statues on the terrace; but there is a door, and it opens and shuts behind me smartly. Then I find myself in a trap, in the presence of the brigand who has quietly gagged poor André and conducted the carriage thither. There is nothing for me to do, as a gallant French Marquis, but to say "*Parbleu!*" draw my rapier, and die valorously! I am found a week or two after, outside a deserted *cabaret* near the barrier, with a hole through my ruffled linen and my pockets stripped. No; on second thoughts, I am rescued—rescued by the angel I have been dreaming of, who is the assumed daughter of the brigand, but the real daughter of an intimate friend.

Looking from the window again, in the vain hope of distinguishing the driver, I found my eyes were growing accustomed to the darkness. I could

see the distant horizon, defined by india-inky woods, relieving a lighter sky. A few stars widely spaced in this picture glimmered sadly. I noticed again the infinite depth of patient sorrow in their serene faces; and I hope that the Vandal who first applied the flippant "twinkle" to them may not be driven melancholy mad by their reproachful eyes. I noticed again the mystic charm of space that imparts a sense of individual solitude to each integer of the densest constellation, involving the smallest star with immeasurable loneliness. Something of this calm and solitude crept over me, and I dozed in my gloomy cavern. When I awoke the full moon was rising. Seen from my window, it had an indescribably unreal and theatrical effect. It was the full moon of Norma—that remarkable celestial phenomenon which rises so palpably to a hushed audience and a sublime *andante* chorus, until the *Casta Diva* is sung—the "inconstant moon" that then and thereafter remains fixed in the heavens as though it were a part of the solar system inaugurated by Joshua. Again the white-robed Druids filed past me, again I saw that improbable mistletoe cut from that impossible oak, and again cold chills ran down my back with the first strain of the recitative. The thumping springs essayed to beat time, and the private-box-like obscurity of the vehicle lent a cheap enchantment

to the view. But it was a vast improvement upon my past experience, and I hugged the fond delusion.

My fears for the driver were dissipated with the rising moon. A familiar sound had assured me of his presence in the full possession of at least one of his most important functions. Frequent and full expectoration convinced me that his lips were as yet not sealed by the gag of highwaymen, and soothed my anxious ear. With this load lifted from my mind, and assisted by the mild presence of Diana, who left, as when she visited Endymion, much of her splendour outside my cavern—I looked around the empty vehicle. On the forward seat lay a woman's hair-pin. I picked it up with an interest that, however, soon abated. There was no scent of the roses to cling to it still, not even of hair-oil. No bend or twist in its rigid angles betrayed any trait of its wearer's character. I tried to think that it might have been "Mariar's." I tried to imagine that, confining the symmetrical curls of that girl, it might have heard the soft compliments whispered in her ears, which provoked the wrath of the aged female. But in vain. It was reticent and unswerving in its upright fidelity, and at last slipped listlessly through my fingers.

I had dozed repeatedly—walked on the threshold of oblivion by contact with some of the angles of the coach, and feeling that I was unconsciously as-



suming, in imitation of a humble insect of my childish recollection, that spherical shape which could best resist those impressions, when I perceived that the moon, riding high in the heavens, had begun to separate the formless masses of the shadowy landscape. Trees isolated, in clumps and assemblages, changed places before my window. The sharp outlines of the distant hills came back, as in daylight, but little softened in the dry, cold, dewless air of a Californian summer night. I was wondering how late it was, and thinking that if the horses of the night travelled as slowly as the team before us, Faustus might have been spared his agonising prayer, when a sudden spasm of activity attacked my driver. A succession of whip-snapplings, like a pack of Chinese crackers, broke from the box before me. The stage leaped forward, and when I could pick myself from under the seat, a long white building had in some mysterious way rolled before my window. It must be Slumgullion! As I descended from the stage I addressed the driver:—

“I thought you changed horses on the road?”

“So we did. Two hours ago.”

“That’s odd. I didn’t notice it.”

“Must have been asleep, sir. Hope you had a pleasant nap. Bully place for a nice quiet snooze, —empty stage, sir!”



## A SLEEPING-CAR EXPERIENCE.

**I**T was in a Pullman sleeping-car on a Western road. After that first plunge into unconsciousness which the weary traveller takes on getting into his berth, I awakened to the dreadful revelation that I had been asleep only two hours. The greater part of a long winter night was before me to face with staring eyes.

Finding it impossible to sleep, I lay there wondering a number of things: why, for instance, the Pullman sleeping-car blankets were unlike other blankets; why they were like squares cut out of cold buckwheat cakes, and why they clung to you when you turned over, and lay heavy on you without warmth; why the curtains before you could not have been made opaque, without being so thick and suffocating; why it would not be as well to sit up all night half asleep in an ordinary passenger-car as to lie awake all night in a Pullman. But the snoring of my fellow-passengers answered this question in the negative.

With the recollection of last night's dinner weighing on me as heavily and coldly as the blankets, I began wondering why, over the whole extent of the continent, there was no local dish ; why the bill of fare at restaurant and hotel was invariably only a weak reflex of the metropolitan hostelryes ; why the *entrées* were always the same, only more or less badly cooked ; why the travelling American always was supposed to demand turkey and cold cranberry sauce ; why the pretty waiter-girl apparently shuffled your plates behind your back, and then dealt them over your shoulder in a semi-circle as if they were a hand at cards, and not always a good one ? Why, having done this, she instantly retired to the nearest wall, and gazed at you scornfully, as one who would say, "Fair sir, though lowly, I am proud ; if thou dost imagine that I would permit undue familiarity of speech, beware !" And then I began to think of and dread the coming breakfast ; to wonder why the ham was always cut half an inch thick, and why the fried egg always resembled a glass eye that visibly winked at you with diabolical dyspeptic suggestions ; to wonder if the buckwheat cakes, the eating of which requires a certain degree of artistic preparation and deliberation, would be brought in as usual one minute before the train started. And then I had a vivid recollection of a fellow-passenger who, at a certain breakfast station

in Illinois, frantically enwrapped his portion of this national pastry in his red bandana handkerchief, took it into the smoking-car, and quietly devoured it *en route*.

Lying broad awake, I could not help making some observations which I think are not noticed by the day traveller. First, that the speed of a train is not equal or continuous. That at certain times the engine apparently starts up, and says to the baggage train behind it, "Come, come, this won't do! Why, it's nearly half-past two; how in life shall we get through? Don't you talk to *me*. Pooh, pooh!" delivered in that rhythmical fashion which all meditation assumes on a railway train. *Exempli gratia*: One night, having raised my window-curtain to look over a moonlit snowy landscape, as I pulled it down the lines of a popular comic song flashed across me. Fatal error! The train instantly took it up, and during the rest of the night I was haunted by this awful refrain: "Pull down the bel-lind, pull down the bel-lind; somebody's klink klink, O don't be shoo-shoo!" Naturally this differs on the different railways. On the New York Central, where the road-bed is quite perfect and the steel rails continuous, I have heard this irreverent train give the words of a certain popular revival hymn after this fashion: "Hold the fort, for I am Sankey; Moody slingers still. Wave the swish swash back

from klinky, klinky klanky kill." On the New York and New Haven, where there are many switches, and the engine whistles at every cross road, I have often heard. "Tommy make room for your whoopy! that's a little clang; bumpity, bumpity, boopy, clikitty, clikitty, clang." Poetry, I fear, fared little better. One starlit night, coming from Quebec, as we slipped by a virgin forest, the opening lines of "Evangeline" flashed upon me. But all I could make of them was this: "This is the forest primeval-aval; the groves of the pines and the hemlocks-locks-locks-locks-loooock!" The train was only "slowing" or "braking" up at a station. Hence the jar in the metre.

I had noticed a peculiar *Æolian* harp-like cry that ran through the whole train as we settled to rest at last after a long run—an almost sigh of infinite relief, a musical sigh that began in C and ran gradually up to F natural, which I think most observant travellers have noticed day and night. No railway official has ever given me a satisfactory explanation of it. As the car, in a rapid run, is always slightly projected forward of its trucks, a practical friend once suggested to me that it was the gradual settling back of the car body to a state of inertia, which, of course, every poetical traveller would reject. Four o'clock—the sound of boot-blackening by the porter faintly apparent from the

toilet-room. Why not talk to him? But, fortunately, I remembered that any attempt at extended conversation with conductor or porter was always resented by them as implied disloyalty to the company they represented. I recalled that once I had endeavoured to impress upon a conductor the absolute folly of a midnight inspection of tickets, and had been treated by him as an escaped lunatic. No, there was no relief from this suffocating and insupportable loneliness to be gained then. I raised the window-blind and looked out. We were passing a farm-house. A light, evidently the lantern of a farm-hand, was swung beside a barn. Yes, the faintest tinge of rose in the far horizon. Morning, surely, at last.

We had stopped at a station. Two men had got into the car, and had taken seats in the one vacant section, yawning occasionally, and conversing in a languid, perfunctory sort of way. They sat opposite each other, occasionally looking out of the window, but always giving the strong impression that they were tired of each other's company. As I looked out of my curtains at them, the One Man said, with a feebly concealed yawn :—

“Yes, well, I reckon he was at one time as poplar an undertaker ez I knew.”

The Other Man (inventing a question rather than giving an answer, out of some languid, social

impulse): "But was he—this yer undertaker—a Christian—had he jined the church?"

The One Man (reflectively): "Well, I don't know ez you might call him a purfessin' Christian; but he hed—yes, he hed conviction. I think Dr. Wylie hed him under conviction. Et least that was the way I got it from *him*."

A long, dreary pause. The other Man (feeling it was incumbent upon him to say something): "But why was he poplar ez an undertaker?"

The One Man (lazily): "Well he was kinder poplar with widders and widderers—sorter soother 'em a kinder keerless way; slung 'em suthin here and there, sometimes outer the Book, sometimes outer hisself, ez a man of experience as hed hed sorrow. He'd, they say (*very cautiously*), lost three wives hisself, and five children by this yer new disease—diphthery—out in Wisconsin. I don't know the facts, but that's what's got round."

The Other Man: "But how did he lose his popularity?"

The One Man: "Well, that's the question. You see he interduced some things into undertaking that was new. He hed for instance, a way, as he called it, of manniperlating the features of the deceased."

The Other Man (quietly): "How manniperlating?"

The One Man (struck with a bright and aggres-

sive thought): "Look yer, did ye ever notiss how, generally speakin', onhandsome a corpse is?"

The Other Man had noticed this fact.

The One Man (returning to his fact): "Why, there was Mary Peebles, ez was daughter of my wife's bosom friend—a mighty pooty girl and a professing Christian—died of scarlet fever. Well, that gal—I was one of the mourners, being my wife's friend—well, that gal—though I hedn't, perhaps, oughter say—lying in that casket, fetched all the way from some A 1 establishment in Chicago, filled with flowers and furbelows—didn't really seem to be of much account. Well, although my wife's friend, and me a mourner—well, now, I was—disappointed and discouraged."

The Other Man (in palpably affected sympathy): "Sho! now!"

"Yes, *sir*! Well, you see this yer undertaker, this Wilkins, hed a way of correctin' all that. And just by manniperlation. He worked over the face of the deceased until he produced what the survivin' relatives called a look of resignation—you know, a sort of smile, like. When he wanted to put in any extrys, he produced what he called—hevin reglar charges for this kind of work—a Christian's hope."

The Other Man: "I want to know."

"Yes. Well, I admit, at times it was a little startlin'. And I've allers said (a little confiden-



tially) that I had my doubts of its being Scriptooral or sacred, we being, ez you know, worms of the yearth; and I relieved my mind to our pastor, but he didn't feel like interferin', ez long ez it was confined to church membership. But the other day, when Cy Dunham died—you disremember Cy Dunham?"

A long interval of silence. The Other Man was looking out of the window, and had apparently forgotten his companion completely. But as I stretched my head out of the curtain, I saw four other heads as eagerly reached out from other berths to hear the conclusion of the story. One head, a female one, instantly disappeared on my looking around, but a certain tremulousness of her window-curtain showed an unabated interest. The only two utterly disinterested men were the One Man and the Other Man.

The Other Man (detaching himself languidly from the window): "Cy Dunham?"

"Yes; Cy never hed hed either convictions or purfessions. Uster get drunk and go round with permiscous women. Sorter like the prodigal son, only a little more so, ez fur ez I kin judge from the facks ez stated to me. Well, Cy one day petered out down at Little Rock, and was sent up yer for interment. The fammerly, being proud-like, of course didn't spare no money on that

funeral, and it waz—now between you and me—about ez shapely and first-class and prime-mess affair ez I ever saw. Wilkins hed put in his extrys. He hed put onto that prodigal's face the A 1 touch, hed him fixed up with a 'Christian's hope.' Well it was about the turning-point, for thar waz some of the members and the pastor hisself thought that the line oughter to be drawn somewhere, and thar waz some talk at Deacon 'Tibbet's about a reg'lar conference meetin' regardin' it. But it wasn't thet which made him onpoplar."

Another silence; no expression nor reflection from the face of the Other Man of the least desire to know what ultimately settled the unpopularity of the undertaker. But from the curtains of the various berths several eager and one or two even wrathful faces, anxious for the result.

The Other Man (lazily recurring to the fading topic): "Well what made him onpoplar?"

The One Man (quietly): Extrys, I think—that is I suppose, not knowin' " (cautiously) "all the facts. When Mrs. Widdecombe lost her husband, 'bout two months ago, though she'd been through the valley of the shadder of death twice—this bein' her third marriage, hevin' been John Barker's widder—"

The other man with an intense expression of interest) "No, you're fooling me!"

The One Man (solemnly): "Ef I was to appear before my Maker to-morrow, yes! she was the widder of Barker."

The Other Man: "Well I swow."

The One Man: "Well, this Widder Widdecombe she put up a big funeral for the deceased. She hed Wilkins, and thet ondertaker just laid hisself out. Just spread hisself. Onfort'natly — perhaps fort'natly in the ways of Providence—one of Widdecombe's old friends, a doctor up thar in Chicago, comes down to the funeral. He goes up with the friends to look at the deceased smilin' a peaceful sort o' heavenly smile, and everybody sayin' he's gone to meet his reward, and this yer friend turns round, short and sudden on the widder settin' in her pew, and kinder enjoyin', as wimen will, all the compliments paid the corpse, and he says, says he:—

"'What did you say your husband died of, marm?'

"'Consumption,' she says, wiping her eyes, poor critter. 'Consumption—gallopin' consumption.'

"'Consumption be blest,' sez he, bein' a profane kind of Chicago doctor, and not bein' ever under conviction. 'Thet man died of strychnine. Look at thet face. Look at thet contortion of them fashal muscles. Thet's strychnine. Thet's *risers Sardonikus*' (thet's what he said; he was always sorter profane)."

“ ‘Why, doctor,’ says the widder, ‘thet—thet is his last smile. It’s a Christian’s resignation.’ ”

“ ‘Thet be blowed; don’t tell me,’ sez he. ‘Hades is full of thet kind of resignation. It’s pizon. And I’ll—’ Why dern my skin, yes we are; yes, it’s Joliet. Wall, now, who’d hev thought we’d been nigh onto an hour?’ ”

Two or three anxious passengers from their berths: “Say; look yer stranger! Old man! What became of—”

But the One Man and the Other Man had vanished.





## A JERSEY CENTENARIAN.



HAVE seen her at last. She is a hundred and seven years old, and remembers George Washington quite distinctly. It is somewhat confusing, however, that she also remembers a contemporaneous Josiah W. Perkins, of Basking Ridge, N.J., and, I think, has the impression that Perkins was the better man. Perkins, at the close of the last century, paid her some little attention. There are a few things that a really noble woman of a hundred and seven never forgets.

It was Perkins, who said to her in 1795, in the streets of Philadelphia, "Shall I show thee Gen. Washington?" Then she said careless-like (for you know, child, at that time it wasn't what it is now to see Gen. Washington), she said, "So do, Josiah, so do!" Then he pointed to a tall man who got out of a carriage, and went into a large house. He was larger than you be. He wore his own hair—not powdered; had a flowered chintz vest, with yellow breeches and blue stockings, and a broad brimmed hat. In summer he wore a white straw hat, and at his farm at Basking Ridge he

always wore it. At this point, it became too evident that she was describing the clothes of the all-fascinating Perkins; so I gently but firmly led her back to Washington. Then it appeared that she did not remember exactly what he wore. To assist her I sketched the general historic dress of that period. She said she thought he was dressed like that. Emboldened by my success, I added a hat of Charles II., and pointed shoes of the eleventh century. She endorsed these with such cheerful alacrity, that I dropped the subject.

The house upon which I had stumbled, or rather, to which my horse—a Jersey hack, accustomed to historic research—had brought me, was low and quaint. Like most old houses, it had the appearance of being encroached upon by the surrounding glebe, as if it were already half in the grave, with a sod or two, in the shape of moss thrown on it, like ashes on ashes, and dust on dust. A wooden house, instead of acquiring dignity with age, is apt to lose its youth and respectability together. A porch, with scant, sloping seats, from which even the winter's snow must have slid uncomfortably, projected from the doorway that opened most unjustifiably into a small sitting-room. There was no vestibule, or *locus pœnitentiæ*, for the embarrassed or bashful visitor; he passed at once from the security of the public road into shameful privacy. And here, in the mellow autumnal sunlight, that, streaming through the maples and sumach on the

opposite bank, flickered and danced upon the floor, she sat and discoursed of George Washington, and thought of Perkins. She was quite in keeping with the house and the season, albeit a little in advance of both; her skin being of a faded russet, and her hands so like dead November leaves, that I fancied they even rustled when she moved them.

For all that, she was quite bright and cheery; her faculties still quite vigorous, although performing irregular and spasmodically. It was somewhat discomposing, I confess, to observe, that at times her lower jaw would drop, leaving her speechless, until one of the family would notice it, and raise it smartly into place with a slight snap—an operation always performed in such an habitual, perfunctory manner, generally in passing to and fro in their household duties, that it was very trying to the spectator. It was still more embarrassing to observe that the dear old lady had evidently no knowledge of this, but believed she was still talking, and that, on resuming her actual vocal utterance, she was often abrupt and incoherent, beginning always in the middle of a sentence, and often in the middle of a word. "Sometimes," said her daughter, a giddy, thoughtless young thing of eighty-five,— "sometimes just moving her head sort of unhitches her jaw; and if we don't happen to see it, she'll go on talking for hours without ever making a sound." Although I was convinced, after this, that during my interview I had lost several important revelations

regarding George Washington through these peculiar lapses, I could not help reflecting how beneficent were these provisions of the Creator—how, if properly studied and applied, they might be fraught with happiness to mankind—how a slight jostle or jar at a dinner-party might make the postprandial eloquence of garrulous senility satisfactory to itself, yet harmless to others—how a more intimate knowledge of anatomy, introduced into the domestic circle, might make a home tolerable at least, if not happy—how a long-suffering husband, under the pretence of a conjugal caress, might so unhook his wife's condyloid process as to allow the flow of expostulation, criticism, or denunciation, to go on with gratification to her, and perfect immunity to himself.

But this was not getting back to George Washington and the earlier struggles of the Republic. So I returned to the commander-in-chief, but found, after one or two leading questions, that she was rather inclined to resent his re-appearance on the stage. Her reminiscences here were chiefly social and local, and more or less flavoured with Perkins. We got back as far as the Revolutionary epoch, or, rather, her impressions of that epoch when it was still fresh in the public mind. And here I came upon an incident, purely personal and local, but, withal, so novel, weird, and uncanny, that for awhile I fear it quite displaced George Washington in my mind, and tinged the autumnal



fields beyond with a red that was not of the sumach. I do not remember to have read of it in the books. I do not know that it is entirely authentic. It was attested to me by mother and daughter, as an uncontradicted tradition.

In the little field beyond, where the plough still turns up musket-balls and cartridge-boxes, took place one of those irregular skirmishes between the militiamen and Knyphausen's stragglers that made the retreat historical. A Hessian soldier, wounded in both legs and utterly helpless, dragged himself to the cover of a hazel-copse, and lay there hidden for two days. On the third day, maddened by thirst, he managed to creep to the rail-fence of an adjoining farmhouse, but found himself unable to mount it or pass through. There was no one in the house, but a little girl of six or seven years. He called to her, and in a faint voice asked for water. She returned to the house as if to comply with his request, but mounting a chair, took from the chimney a heavily loaded Queen Anne musket, and, going to the door, took deliberate aim at the helpless intruder, and fired. The man fell back dead, without a groan. She replaced the musket, and, returning to the fence, covered the body with boughs and leaves, until it was hidden. Two or three days after, she related the occurrence in a careless casual way, and leading the way to the fence with a piece of bread-and-butter in her guileless little fingers, pointed out the result of

her simple, unsophisticated effort. The Hessian was decently buried, but I could not find out what became of the little girl. Nobody seemed to remember. I trust that in after-years she was happily married; that no Jersey Lovelace attempted to trifle with a heart whose impulses were so prompt, and whose purposes were so sincere. They did not seem to know if she had married or not. Yet it does not seem probable that such simplicity of conception, frankness of expression, and deftness of execution were lost to posterity, or that they failed, in their time and season, to give flavour to the domestic felicity of the period. Beyond this, the story perhaps has little value, except as an offset to the usual anecdotes of Hessian atrocity.

They had their financial panics even in Jersey, in the old days. She remembered when Dr. White married your cousin Mary—or was it Susan?—yes, it was Susan. She remembered that your uncle Harry brought in an armful of bank-notes—paper money, you know—and threw them in the corner, saying they were no good to anybody. She remembered playing with them, and giving them to your aunt Anna—no, child, it was your own mother, bless your heart! Some of them was marked as high as a hundred dollars. Everybody kept gold and silver in a stocking, or in a “chaney” vase, like that. You never used money to buy anything. When Josiah went to Springfield to buy anything, he took a cartload of things with him to

exchange. That yaller picture-frame was paid for in greenings. But then people knew jest what they had. They didn't fritter their substance away in un-Christian trifles, like your father, Eliza Jane, who doesn't know that there is One who will smite him hip and thigh; for "vengeance is mine, and those that believe in me." But here, singularly enough, the inferior maxillaries gave out, and her jaw dropped. When she recovered her speech again, she was complaining of the weather.

The seasons had changed very much since your father went to sea. The winters used to be terrible in those days. When she went over to Springfield, in June, she saw the snow still on Watson's Ridge. There were whole days when you couldn't git over to William Henry's, their next neighbour, a quarter of a mile away. It was that drefful winter that the Spanish sailor was found. You don't remember the Spanish sailor Eliza Jane—it was before your time. There was a little personal skirmishing here, which I feared, might end in the loss of the story; but here it is. Ah, me! A pure white winter idyl: how shall I sing it this bright, gay autumnal day?

It was a terrible night, that winter's night when she and the century were young together. The sun was lost at three o'clock: the snowy night came down like a white sheet, that flapped around the house, beat at the windows and its edges, and at last wrapped it in a close embrace. In the middle of the night, they thought they heard above the wind

a voice crying, "Christus, Christus!" in a foreign tongue. They opened the door—no easy task in the north wind that pressed its strong shoulders against it—but nothing was to be seen but the drifting snow. The next morning dawned on fences hidden, and a landscape changed and obliterated with drift. During the day, they again heard the cry of "Christus!" this time faint and hidden, like a child's voice. They searched in vain: the drifted snow still hid its secret. On the third day they broke a path to the fence, and then they heard the cry distinctly. Digging down, they found the body of a man—a Spanish sailor, dark and bearded, with earrings in his ears. As they stood gazing down at his cold and pulseless figure, the cry of "Christus!" again rose upon the wintry air; and they turned and fled in superstitious terror to the house. And then one of the children, bolder than the rest, knelt down and opened the dead man's rough pea-jacket, and found—what think you?—a little blue-and-green parrot, nestling against his breast. It was the bird that had echoed mechanically the last despairing cry of the life that was given to save it. It was the bird, that ever after, amid outlandish oaths and wilder sailor-songs, that I fear often shocked the pure ears of its gentle mistress, and brought scandal into the Jerseys still retained that one weird and mournful cry.

The sun meanwhile was sinking behind the steadfast range beyond, and I could not help feeling

that I must depart with my wants unsatisfied. I had brought away no historic fragment: I absolutely knew little or nothing new regarding George Washington. I had been addressed variously by the names of different members of the family who were dead and forgotten; I had stood for an hour in the past: yet I had not added to my historical knowledge, nor the practical benefit of your readers. I spoke once more of Washington, and she replied with a reminiscence of Perkins.

Stand forth, O Josiah W. Perkins of Basking Ridge, N.J. Thou wast of little account in thy life, I warrant; thou didst not even feel the greatness of thy day and time; thou didst criticise thy superiors; thou wast small and narrow in thy ways; thy very name and grave are unknown and uncared-for; but thou wast once kind to a woman who survived thee, and, lo! thy name is again spoken of men, and for a moment lifted up above thy betters.











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